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ADRIFT IN DIXIE;

OR,

A YANKEE OFFICER AMONG THE REBELS.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

EDMUND KIRKE,

AUTHOR OF "AMONG THE PINES," "MY SOUTHERN FRIENDS," "DOWN IN
TENNESSEE," "AMONG THE GUERRILLAS," "ON THE BORDER," ETC.



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INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION.

As this volume is given to the public solely at the suggestion of the writer of this, it may be proper that he should prefix to it a few words by way of introduction.

The author is Henry L. Estabrooks, a young gentleman of Dorchester, Mass., who, throughout the war, was a lieutenant in the Twenty-sixth Regiment of Massachusetts infantry, and, being taken prisoner at the battle of Berryville, passed over forty days in wandering through the Rebel country. He was at first sent to the Libby Prison, but, in a short time, was conveyed from there to the railway for removal to the Far South. On the route, he contrived to escape from the cars, and after a journey of thirty days, performed on foot and mostly at night, over guarded roads and along a dangerous river, managed to get to the Union lines.

General Grant gave him at once a furlough; and, going home, he wrote out, while its every incident was fresh in his memory, the following narrative of his most remarkable journey.

The narrative was not intended for publication, and for long was seen only by the partial friends who gather under the "old roof-tree;" but, after being read and re-read around the family fireside, it crept out into the colder outside air, and, one wintry morning, galloped across several miles of hilly country, and pulled up at my doorway.

I took it in, and gave it a warm place by the winter fire. I could not do otherwise: for a pair of bright eyes, rosy cheeks, and smiling lips, came with it, and said to me (the lips, I mean), "It is true, Mr. Kirke; and you will be interested in it; for it tells how faithful and kind the Southern negroes were to one who had no claim on them other than being a Northern man and a Union soldier."

I sat down to the manuscript, and, before rising, had read it through from end to end. It not only interested, it delighted me; for it gave me my first

vivid idea of the present disposition and feelings of the Southern negroes. The newspapers had said in a general way that they were loyal; that they had performed important services to our armies, often warning them of danger, and guiding them to victory: but this narrative, in a series of graphic pictures evidently drawn from life, showed how, at imminent risk, they had harbored and befriended our escaping soldiers, given them of their meagre food and their scanty clothing, and led them, in the cold storm and the starless midnight, through pathless woods and trackless swamps, safely to the lines of our armies.

“This narrative should be published,” I said to the rosy-cheeked messenger; “for it tells what the North does not as yet fully realize,—the great fact that in the very heart of the South are four millions of people,—of strong, able-bodied, true-hearted people,—whose loyalty led them, while the heel of the “chivalry” was on their necks, and a halter was dangling before their eyes, to give their last crust, and their only suit of Sunday homespun, to

the fleeing fugitive, simply because he wore the livery and fought the battles of the Union."

"Do with it as you like," said the rosy-cheeked messenger. "We owe my brother's life to the negroes; and you can publish his journal, if you think it will do them any good."

That same evening a gentleman came to my house, who, once a week, reminds an intelligent congregation that "God hath made of one blood all nations that dwell on the face of the earth;" and I mentioned to him the narrative, and my thought of giving it to the public. "Don't do it," he said very decidedly: "we have heard enough about the negro."

"Enough of him," I answered, "as a slave, but scarcely any thing of him while looking and waiting for freedom. If his patience and fortitude, and fidelity to the Union during the war, are fully shown, it may help to secure him his full rights as a freeman."

"But you wouldn't give him all the rights of a

citizen? *You* certainly know he is not fit for suffrage."

"Why not fit for suffrage?"

"Because of his ignorance. Not one in twenty of the negroes can read or write."

"Neither can one in four of the voters in our Northern cities. If reading and writing were necessary qualifications to citizenship, Alexander the Great, and probably ten of the twelve apostles, would have been denied a country. My notion is, that there is an education which is better than that had from books,—that which a man gets in the school of hard work and adversity. The negroes have that sort of education."

"But they won't work for wages: they'll only labor on compulsion. We hear that by every mail from the South."

"That doesn't prove it true; but, if it be true, it shows only that the negro knows his late master, and fears to trust him till the end of harvest. He fears, that, after getting his work, he will cheat him of his wages. Neither you nor I will work if un-

certain of our pay. A dozen Southern planters have told me, since the war, that the negro will labor willingly if paid every Saturday."

"Well, well! The nigger is black. We must have a white country; and we can't have it if we let him vote, and hold office."

"We can't have it anyway. Providence never meant we should have it: if it had, it would not have allowed the slave-trade to empty upon us so much of Africa."

Much more was said; but this is what rested on my mind, and decided me to give this little volume to a publisher; for it fully overturns the positions of my clerical friend, — that the negro is black, ignorant, and unwilling to work: and these "facts" are, I believe, the staple arguments of the opponents of negro suffrage.

The narrative proves that the negro will work; for the people in this book — all of them — worked faithfully and willingly in the midst of war, when nearly every white man was in the Rebel armies,

and too far away to employ either moral suasion or compulsion upon their slaves.

It proves, too, that the negro is not black. Color, like beauty, is only skin-deep; and the men who helped this young officer to his life and freedom showed that they had souls of the very whitest complexion.

It proves also that he is not ignorant. These men knew their country; recognized and succored one of its friends; chided him when he spoke harshly of his enemies; and recognized their dependence on God by kneeling on the rocky bank of the Dan, and asking him to guide the tired fugitive safely along its dangerous current. If such knowledge is not the highest kind of knowledge, then every pulpit in this broad country tells a weekly falsehood.

But, after all, many of my readers will persist in believing that the Southern negro is black, ignorant, and unwilling to work. It may be, that, using words in the usual way, this is true: but if it be true of the negro, it is equally true of the

“chivalry;” and, by the chivalry, I do not mean the masses of the South, but those fifty thousand or more aristocrats who have ground the negro to the earth, and brought upon the country a war without a parallel in history, solely to make endless the system which was crushing out of the Southern working-man — white as well as black — nearly every vestige of manhood.

I insist that the chivalry are black, ignorant, and unwilling to work; and, if those things disqualify the negroes for citizenship in a white republic, they equally disqualify the “chivalry.”

They are unwilling to work. They have always wrung their bread from the bloody sweat of other men; always been barren trees, drawing its rich juices from the soil, and giving out in return no blossoms and no fruit. “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,” was said by Him who came on earth to show us the highest type of manhood; but these men have called that a disgrace which he esteemed an honor, branded that as shame which he made the badge of the highest nobility.

They are ignorant; ignorant of the first rudiments of nineteenth-century knowledge, that "all men are created equal (before the law), and endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights;" and they are ignorant, too, of that fundamental principle of political economy,—that poverty and degradation in one class entail poverty and degradation upon all other classes in a nation.

And they are black, and black because they have withheld his rights from the negro. In his earliest infancy, the scion of the chivalry has learned that he could domineer, unchecked, over small colored humanity; and, when old enough to go to the neighboring village-school, he has seen ever at his heels an image of God, cut in ebony, which grinned when he grinned, and was struck with lightning whenever he thundered forth the big words so common to Young America North and South. And, when coming up to manhood, he has seen all of the world with which he was acquainted—his father's black slaves, and his equally obsequious white vassals—making obeisance to him as if

he were of better clay than they. Is it strange, then, that he has grown up to think he is monarch of all he surveys, and that, at his frown, all creation should tremble? Is it strange, with no check on his passions, no bridle on his will, that he should, as a man, be proud, passionate, treacherous, revengeful, overbearing, and greedy of power?

These are the traits of his class: of course I speak of the class; for there are many exceptions. Everywhere there are men in whom God has implanted so much of the principle of goodness, that it cannot be dwarfed by the most barren soil, or chilled by the most icy atmosphere; and there are such men—many of them—among the “chivalry” of the South. But, as a class, they are all that I say. In all the traits I have named, they are the equals of Satan; and in political cunning and dishonesty they outdo “the wild devil withal,” and almost equal some of our Northern politicians.

And is it to these men, who are born aristocrats, who have no one principle or feeling in harmony with republican institutions, who are black with a

blackness which is ingrained, — has struck inwards, and dyed their very souls, — that we would commit again the government of the South, while we deny to the other black men, whose skins only are colored, the right to say at the ballot-box that they are men, and that white men, with white souls, shall rule over them?

Do we forget that a small bonfire was lit on Boston Common thirty years ago, whose ascending flames traced on the sky, as with the finger of God, the words, “Freedom for all men, black as well as white”?

It was only a small bonfire; but it spread, — spread wider and wider, and waxed brighter and brighter, until it illuminated the whole North, and showed three millions of freemen their true interests, and made them say at the polls, “Thus far shall slavery come, and no farther; and here shall its dark waves be stayed.”

Intrenched behind the Constitution, which secured to each State the undisturbed control of its domestic concerns, we expected that the “chival-

ry" would fold their arms, and gaze calmly on that advancing conflagration. But they did not. They were not like a Boston merchant I once knew, who, when told that his warehouse was in flames, coolly replied, "It can't be possible; for I've the key in my pocket." They had the keys in their pockets, and the Constitution had double-locked the door: but *they* knew that fire is an element that does not always knock at doorways; that it sometimes enters at windows, and sometimes kindles within the building itself.

Already that Northern fire had run down into Maryland and Delaware; already it had spanned the Ohio, and set Northern Kentucky and Western Virginia in a blaze; already it had leaped the Missouri border, and lit there a bonfire to freedom that would never go out. If it came nearer, if it crossed the tobacco States, and lit up the dark atmosphere of Cottondom, would not the Southern masses—white and black—see by it their true interests, as the Northern masses had done, and kindle a flame within the sacred edifice itself, that

would topple it down, a blackened ruin, in a night? They would. The "chivalry" knew that they would, and therein they saw their danger.

How to stay the farther progress of that fire Southwards, was, therefore, the question. How could it be done? How does the traveller, who sees afar off on the prairie a mighty conflagration lighting the whole heavens, escape the impending flames? Not by flight; for foot of man or beast never yet outstripped that forked fire that journeys on the wings of the wind. No: the traveller does not flee. He gathers a few dead leaves, he splits a few dry fagots; he heaps them together, and kindles a counter-fire; and behind its flames he is safe. The sky may be hung with black, the earth may be darkened with ruin, the sun itself may seem stricken from the heavens; but the traveller is safe.

So it was like to have been with the "chivalry." They saw that small bonfire kindling thirty years ago on Boston Common; they saw it spreading from one free State to another, and then lighting

up the whole Northern and Eastern sky ; and they saw it at last leaping the border into their own dominions ; and they did not run : for safety was not in flight ; it was, they thought, in a counter-fire. So they gathered a few dead leaves, split a few dry fagots, — they split the last fagot when they split the Charleston Convention, — they heaped them together, and touched a match to the pile : it was a lucifer match, smelling of brimstone, and bearing the brand of the Devil himself. They touched that match at Fort Sumter, and the flames have covered the continent. The sky *is* hung with black ; the earth *is* darkened with ruin ; the sun itself seems stricken from the heavens ; and five hundred thousand human beings have perished in the flames : but now, thanks to the two hundred thousand black men who builded a fire in their rear, the “ chivalry ” are encircled with the flames their own hands enkindled.

I say, thanks to the two hundred thousand black men ; for, deny it as we may, our black soldiers

were the feather which broke the back of the Rebellion.

And now, with hypocritical hearts and cringing knees, and hands yet wet and dripping with our brave boys' blood, the chivalry stand amid all this death and desolation, seeking to recover by fraud the power they have lost by their crimes; wanting to do with the ballot what they have failed to do with the fire!

Shall we let them do it? Must there be another war, another funeral-pile builded of half a million lives, before the country learns that there is no faith nor honor nor honesty in these men; that they must be disfranchised, be forever denied the power they have so wickedly abused, and be made to give place to the honest working-men — black and white — who are to till the Southern fields, and be the real South of the Future?

I would not be misunderstood. I have no sentimental love for the negro. I think him a man, and, giving him all the rights of a man, would let him work out his own salvation. I would do the

same with the "chivalry." I would let them hold property, live in peace, and know the blessing of earning their bread by the sweat of their brows ; but I would not let them again guide Southern opinion, make laws to regulate Southern labor, or again control the legislation of the country.

All this they will do, if we give them back the elective franchise, and do not, at the same time, put a ballot into the hand of every Southern negro.

EDMUND KIRKE.

ADRIET IN DIXIE.

ADRIFT IN DIXIE.

CHAPTER I.

A PRISONER.

ON the eighteenth of September, 1864, General Grant came into the Valley of the Shenandoah to communicate with our commander, General Sheridan. The same afternoon, the army received orders to break camp, and, at two o'clock on the following morning, marched out of its breastworks, and up the valley. Conjecture was busy about our destination; some thinking we were going out to fight, others that we were marching by the way of Berryville and Snicker's Gap to the protection of Washington.

Winchester, which the Rebel army occupied, was at our right; and Snicker's Gap, through which ran the road to Washington, on our left. Our company was in the advance, and, being nearest the cross-roads, saw the

head of the column when it turned to the right. So we were about to measure strength with Early's legions! Sober thoughts came to all; but not a man showed signs of fear: and we pressed on as rapidly as possible, keeping over the open fields to give the wagon-trains unobstructed use of the high-roads. We marched until near daybreak, passing continually seraps of fortifications, and now and then a complete line, stretching far off into the gray darkness; and then halted to allow the sixth and eighth corps to take the advance.

September nineteenth. — A little after sunrise we were again in motion, and pressing on at the double-quick towards Winchester. Far away were high hills, with little strips of yellow about their tops, denoting fortifications; and, nearer by, a long wreath of white smoke was curling upward in the clear air. Towards this smoke we were hurrying. At last we reached a muddy stream running over rocks and sand. It was the Opequan Creek; and there we saw our first wounded man, lying near the smoking ruins of a flouring-mill, which a body of our cavalry had destroyed the night before.

Fording the stream, we soon came upon our wagon-trains and ambulances, packed in great squares on either

side of the road. Two of our companies, acting as Sheridan's headquarters' guard, greeted us noisily as we went by; and then we pressed on, passing a great many dead horses in all stages of decay, some of them poisoning the very air, and soon entered a narrow defile, our two brigades crowding along a road scarcely wide enough for one to march comfortably. At the entrance of this defile, we encountered about a hundred and fifty Rebel prisoners, some of them wounded, and, a little farther on, came upon a field-hospital, with detached legs, arms, hands, feet, and every form of mangled humanity, scattered about on the green grass around it. It was not a pleasant sight to one every moment nearing its cause; and, with compressed lips, we hurried sternly forward.

Soon afterwards we reached the farther end of the pass, and, bearing off to the edge of a wood on the right, formed in the front line; the other brigades of our division forming in our rear. We remained here nearly an hour, a fierce cannonade meanwhile going on directly at our left. During this hour, some of us took a little nap, others a little coffee; but nearly all stood silently waiting, and thinking of the impending struggle. Meanwhile, Company I, of our regiment, had been sent to the front as skirmishers, with

orders to move forward until they found something. We soon knew by the reports of their muskets that they had found it; and, an orderly riding up, we were ordered to move forward into the battle.

Pressing on through the wood, we soon came to its outer edge, and saw dense masses of men, in brownish-gray, with glittering bayonets, and a multitude of blood-red, star-crossed battle-flags drawn up directly in our front. Here and there a battery was hurling fire and smoke; and away to the left, moving forward in unison with us, was a long line of blue, among which the Rebel shot and canister were bursting with fearful rapidity. Now and then a man fell out of the ranks; but the great mass moved swiftly on, steady and grand, as the ocean-wave moves upon the shore.

Another small wood, obstructed with thick underbrush, lay between us and the enemy. We broke through it, and then were so near that we could see the very color of their eyes. Without waiting for orders, our men gave a shout and rushed forward, fixing bayonets and running over skirmishers as they went. The Rebels paused a moment, and looked at us; then broke, battle-flags and all, running in utter confusion across the open field, and to a dense wood in the distance. There they made a short stand, but did

not wait for us to get among them before they were up and away again, our bullets planting them in gray heaps about the woods and cornfields. At last our brigade was so far in advance, that we had to turn back, and wait for support to save the whole line from being broken.

At this time I noticed a few Rebels in a ravine directly in our front, and beckoned to them to come in and give themselves up. They appeared disinclined to accept the invitation ; in fact, seemed making up their minds to go the other way : and I ran down among them, followed by several of my men. I had no pistol ; but, putting my sword-point at the breast of one, I demanded his rifle. He gave it up reluctantly, for it was capped and loaded ; and I ordered him and another to the rear, while my men managed the rest of the party. Then I returned to the crest of the ravine, and got a good shot at the main body, which was not yet out of point-blank range. By this time, the Rebels in the distance, having brought eight guns to bear on the point where we were, opened upon us a fire of grape and canister which was perfectly murderous. The ravine was very shallow, and the Rebels fired very low ; but our regiment lay down, and the ground gave them some protection. One of the Rebel batteries soon raked the ravine ; and, looking back, I saw

our poor fellows dropping every here and there. Corporal Wordell crept out of the wood, the blood pouring down his leg in a stream ; but he crawled along, and joined his company : and Captain Chapman, just behind me, threw up his arms, while a red spurt, gushing from his head, showed that he was badly wounded. All this and much more I saw while tearing off a cartridge I had just begged from one of the men.

I emptied the powder into the piece, and was about to drive the bullet home, when I saw a sight that startled me. It was the Rebels rolling back in a fierce wave directly upon us. I cried out to my men, “ Take them as they come over the ridge ! ”

But our line was rapidly melting away to the rear. Some of the officers tried to rally the regiment ; but it was of no avail : and a handful of us were left to oppose a whole Rebel division. It was nearly upon us, shouting to us to surrender, and shooting down almost every man as it swept forward.

It was madness to stay there ; and, throwing down the rifle I had not had time to load, I started toward our right and rear just as the Rebels struck our left. I had not gone a dozen yards, however, before they were within thirty feet,

their bullets flying all about. A ditch was directly in advance ; and, springing into it, I ran along its side : but a mounted Rebel rode before the others, and headed me off. As he came up, he levelled his pistol ; but I fell flat forward, avoiding his shot, and thinking he might suppose me dead. For his purpose, however, a dead officer was just as good as a live one ; and my ruse did not avail me. Calling me a number of impolite names, he raised his pistol, but suddenly altered his mind, and ordered me to give him all I had. I remonstrated rather feebly ; but he had the best of the argument. I produced first a soiled handkerchief, which he contemptuously threw on the ground, and then, after considerable delay, and tugging at the straps and strings, my haversack and canteen ; devoutly hoping every moment to see him fall from his horse, hit by the balls of our men, which were flying by quite briskly. Cursing me for my slowness, he told me to empty my pockets. I entered another protest ; but putting his pistol to my head, and crowding his horse against me, he thrust a hand into each of my wide jacket-pockets, getting a watch from one, and nothing from the other. Meanwhile, putting my hands behind me, and drawing a diamond ring from the little finger of my left hand, by a careless movement I put it into

my mouth. He examined me closely, and, finding nothing more of value, directed three soldiers who were looking on to take me to the rear. Then he happened to observe that I had not given up my sword ; and, demanding and receiving this, he rode off, taking with my other property a few curses, not loud, but deep. They were of consolation to me, even if they were of no harm to him. I inquired of the men who he was ; and they answered, “ Gen. Early’s courier, and part or whole Injun.”

A little farther to the rear, we came upon a Rebel line posted behind a stone wall ; and seeing a mounted officer, who looked very important, I went up to him, and complained of my treatment. He replied that he couldn’t help it, and that our men did the same. I disputed this rather warmly, and he was getting the worst of the argument, when he rode away. I sat under the wall for some time, talking to the Rebels ; but at last an officer came along, and ordered me to be taken to the provost-guard.

On the way, we passed a Rebel standing guard over one of our officers, — a staff-officer of the Fourteenth New-Hampshire. He was lying in a stone hole, his arm broken by a Minie-ball. I paused to ask his name and the address of his family, and then went on, but had gone only a few steps

when one of my guard had his ankle knocked to pieces by a musket-ball. This put the others very much in a hurry; and we soon reached the guard, where were about twenty men and two officers of my regiment, and about forty or fifty of various other regiments, but nearly all of my brigade. Quite a number of them were wounded; one of the officers, Lieutenant Marshall, being shot through the neck, and suffering intensely. I had a number of invitations to give up my haversack and canteen, which I had picked up and brought along; but I clung to them, and they were of great service to me afterwards.

While this was going on, a slight lull occurred in the battle; but now it began again furiously, and the Rebels seemed to be having the worst of it. Their ambulances were continually coming to the rear filled with wounded, and the guard kept moving us a little farther and farther off; but still the shell would fly over us, and the Minie-balls keep scattering all about. The Rebels soon showed signs of running; and a great many stragglers fell away from the ranks, looking back with frightened glances. Then all at once, off on the extreme left of the Rebel line, a long black line of horsemen dashed out of a wood; and starting up in front of them, scarcely waiting to exchange a shot,

but breaking to the rear in utter panic, I saw the Rebel cavalry. The infantry, already wavering, could stand no longer ; and a scene of panic and confusion, from its very confusion hard to describe, followed. We were driven along on a run ; the wounded, who could not be beaten forward, being left behind. Some of the Rebel officers begged and prayed of their men to stand ; but it was of no avail : they were thoroughly demoralized.

We passed Winchester about half a mile to the right, and between the town and our troops, who were shelling us vigorously. Quite a number of Rebels were killed all about us ; but none of the prisoners were hurt.

A little beyond, a squad of cavalry halted our party, and robbed such of us as seemed to have any thing worth taking. One asked me for my pocket-book, and I was very happy to inform him it was on the wagon-train. He was about to take my cap ; but I moved out of his way, and notified the provost-officer of what was going on. The officer tried to induce the cavalry to give up what they had taken, and threatened to use force if they did not ; but the horsemen challenged him to fight, and being of about equal numbers, and better armed, got off with their booty.

At five o'clock in the afternoon, we came to a point

about two miles south of Winchester, where all the Union prisoners, about three hundred in number, were gathered ; and soon afterwards went through Newtown, Middletown, Strasburg, and one or two other small towns, and passed Fisher's Hill, which the Rebels boasted they could never be driven from. All the way, I kept trying to escape ; but the guards were very vigilant, and, every time I made an attempt, would order me back into the ranks, and warn me not to try again. Finally we stopped at a wood called Tom's Run, and there lay down on the ground utterly exhausted.

September twentieth.—We had as yet had nothing to eat ; but in the afternoon of this day some flour and fresh beef was served to us, and it refreshed us greatly. Occasional firing could be heard in the direction of Fisher's Hill, which now was about two miles away.

September twenty-first.—Having no blanket, I was very cold during the night. We drew our rations in flour and beef, and exchanged them at a house near by for two good meals, which were very acceptable. The family were good Union people, as were also another family living a little farther up the road : in fact, the head of the latter was in our army.

September twenty-second. — Heavy firing was heard during the day in the direction of Fisher's Hill ; and two prisoners were added to our number, who told us that our forces were making a determined attack on the Rebel fortifications. There was a lull in the afternoon, and we were lying littered about on the ground, when one of the officers announced that two men of the Twenty-second Iowa were about to give an entertainment. Sure enough, they were. Suddenly, as if dropped from the clouds, two athletic fellows appeared among us, dressed in flesh-colored tights, one with crimson, and the other with blue silk breeches, covered with gold stars, and elongated with silver-spangled slippers. Spreading a blanket on the grass, they commenced a series of very creditable performances ; and a large crowd of Rebels gathered round, expressing great admiration and wonder.

All this day, squads and companies of men had been going to the front, and also wagon-loads of muskets ; but, at four o'clock in the afternoon, there came a number of wagons and soldiers down the road in what seemed very much like haste and disorder. The officers of our guard did not at first know what to make of it ; but they soon learned, and ordered us to fall in double - quick, and the guard to shoot any man who loitered. The road was soon a mass of

wagons and disorganized soldiers, rushing along in the wildest confusion. We were started up the valley, but had not gone far when a cry arose that our cavalry were flanking the Rebels in the gap below. We were then started back toward Fisher's Hill, and pressed on to about half a mile beyond our camp of the morning. There we had to breast the retreating Rebels as a rock breasts a wave. We had not gone far, however, before our guard conceived a new idea, and ordered us to about-face, and start on the back-track again.

September twenty-third. — We marched all that night, and, the next forenoon, arrived in the midst of a heavy rain at the town of Newmarket. Lurid fires were blazing behind us all night, suggesting burning trains and bridges; and scattered all along the road were broken and upset wagons and ambulances. The ground was white with flour; and occasionally we stumbled over quantities of fresh beef, grown shapeless under the tread of many feet.

September twenty-fourth. — At Newmarket we were quartered in an old church, and supplied with flour and bacon; and in the afternoon I went out, accompanied by a guard, and furnished with about twenty dollars of Confederate money, to replenish our stock of provisions. One

young woman asked me all about myself, and would take no pay for what I bought ; and an old lady also, just across the street, would accept of nothing, but gave me all she could spare from her scanty stores. I saw a good many Union families in the valley ; but they were afraid to openly express their sentiments.

September twenty-fifth. — We remained in the church all night, and part of the next day, during which heavy firing continued down the valley. About three in the afternoon, we saw signs of another stampede among the Rebels. We were again ordered to fall in, and soon afterward started southward, and, marching all night, arrived within eight miles of Staunton at sunrise. Each man was here given a half-loaf of soft bread ; and, after resting a while, we again started for Staunton.

That night I tried several times to get away ; but the guard seemed to look out for me particularly. A sergeant of the Hundred and Thirty-first New-York proposed to escape with me ; and we made the attempt, but came very near being shot, and indeed would have been, had not one or two of our comrades jostled the guard while we sprang into the ranks again, where, owing to the darkness, we could not be distinguished. Afterwards I concluded to spring from

a bridge into the river ; but, when just ready to make the leap, two of the guard ranged themselves along by my side, and I had to relinquish the attempt. At every piece of woods we passed, a perfect fever of escape would come over me ; but it was well I did not try. Cavalry skirmishers rode all along the flanks of the column ; and, being some distance away, I might have gone right among them : besides, every piece of woods was filled with disorganized Rebel cavalry, who, having run until they were tired, had halted, and made little bivouacs among the trees.

We arrived at Staunton about noon, and five crackers were given to each one of us for his dinner. After waiting there two hours, and being put on and off the train again and again according to the whim of the different Rebel officers, we finally started, the prisoners on the roof, and the Rebels inside, of a train of freight-cars. After twelve miles of rough travel, we arrived at Waynesborough, where we went into camp on a piece of gravelly ground between two small streams. Here we bathed and rested ourselves as well as we could, and, gathering some scraps of wood, builded a fire. Our guard would not allow us to gather any, except such few chips as had drifted on the gravel where we were encamped ; and that night we were very cold.

September twenty-sixth. — Before daybreak the next morning, we started westward to cross the Blue Ridge, and, arriving at the summit about sunrise, saw a glorious view spread out before us. It was both grand and beautiful, and every thing seemed to combine to make it so. I lingered and looked until I exhausted the patience of the guard, and was ordered to start on down the mountain. We had eaten nothing since noon of the previous day, and not enough then, and had become very hungry. The officer of the guard told us that provisions were behind in a wagon, and that we should receive some after going a little farther; but we marched twenty miles farther, and received none. There probably was none in the wagons: it was only a ruse of the officer to get us forward. Some of the men sank down in the road, utterly exhausted; but I bore up well, and my feet were sound, while those of many others were a perfect pulp of blister.

At length we arrived at Meacham-River Depot, and were told again that we should certainly have food given us, but, after waiting a while, were put upon platform-cars, such as wood is carried on, and started toward Richmond without any. We arrived at Charlottesville at dark, and again were told that our fast should be broken, but, after waiting an

hour or more, — long enough for some of the officers of the guard to get comfortably intoxicated, — were started on again hungry. The cars were much crowded, and no sleep visited our eyes that night. It was very cold too, and the chill wind struck through to our bones as we rode swiftly on against it.

September twenty-seventh. — Early in the morning we arrived in Richmond, and were marched directly from the cars to the Libby Prison, having quite a view of the city on the way. We were insulted by a few persons; but most of the people contented themselves with staring at us, as if they knew we had whipped them well, and were, therefore, not disposed to glory in our misfortunes.

When we reached the prison, the officers were separated from the men, and marched into a gloomy passage-way, and then one at a time taken into an office, where our names, regiment, company, and residence at time of enlistment, were taken down. Then we were taken into another room, and thoroughly searched. We were told, that, if we gave up our money, it would be kept account of, and returned to us on our removal; but if we did not give it up, and it was found, it would be confiscated: so far as I know, no money was ever returned. Our haversacks, canteens, blankets, and such papers as were considered contraband, were

also taken from us. We were then marched up stairs, and put into a room with many other officers, the most of whom belonged to the second corps and were captured at Reim's Station. They were all very eager to hear about the battle, and we gave them all the news we could.

We were nearly famished, but were given nothing to eat until the middle of the afternoon, when about half a pint of black bean-soup, and a junk of bread of about the size and shape of a man's fist, very sour and tough, were served out to us. That night we huddled together, and managed to get a little sleep, although it was very cold, and the floor was hard and uncomfortable. The officers were kept in the upper and next to the upper story. Both stories were pierced with many windows; but there was no glass, nor any thing but a few rusty iron bars, to keep out the cold wind. We had a very good view of Richmond from the upper windows. The Capitol Building, Castle Thunder, the James River and the bridge across it, a monster flouring-mill, the higher part of Belle Isle, the great Government Foundry, and a number of other noted places, were all in plain view.

September twenty-eighth. — We had for breakfast a piece of bread of the same size and quality as before, and a small piece of beef; and for dinner the same food as yesterday.

After dinner, there was a roll-call ; and all fell in, in four ranks, down stairs, to the music of two fifes, a kettle, and a bass-drum, played by some of our boys who had been captured. The music was very good and inspiring, and we were reluctant to go up stairs again. We were supplied with good water, but with not quite enough of it. It was brought up in a leaden pipe, with faucets, but did not run all of the time ; and there was no soap. We were told we might buy bread at a dollar a loaf ; and such of the officers as had Confederate money bought, and divided it among the mess. We were divided into messes of thirteen, and drew our rations, except the beans, in gross, and then divided them. We had to march down stairs to get the beans ; and such of the prisoners as had no dishes had to go without the soup, and take the beans in their hands. Most of them had dishes, however, or soon procured them from others.

I made the acquaintance of a number of officers, and the time passed away quite agreeably. We walked about the room a great deal, usually keeping time, and in four ranks, but had to be careful about going to the windows ; the guards having orders to shoot any one looking out. We could, however, by keeping an eye on the sentinels, and drawing

back when they turned towards us, get stray glimpses of the outside world. .

September twenty-ninth. — The day passed the same as yesterday, except that in the afternoon a great battle was fought down the James, on the left bank of the river. We could see shells bursting, and clouds of smoke rolling up from the musketry-fire, and were somewhat excited at the tremendous roar of the conflict. The people in Richmond appeared panic-stricken, and ran about the streets like lost chickens. At night the tumult died away; but, all the afternoon, wounded men came straggling into town, and all the night large bodies of troops were moving out to the place of attack.

September thirtieth. — Our food this day was the same as the day before. We saw re-enforcements going to the scene of battle in large numbers; and in the forenoon a few prisoners were brought in, who told us that our forces had taken Fort Harrison. In the afternoon there was another very fierce fight, which, for a time, kept us in great suspense. We organized into squads under colonels, the whole under command of General Hayes of the second corps; so that, in case the city should be taken, we could co-operate with our

forces. This last battle closed about sunset ; and we heard afterwards that it was an unsuccessful Rebel attempt to retake Fort Harrison.

October second. — At about two or three o'clock in the morning, we heard a banging noise in the room below ; and some of the old residents said it was the stairs being hauled into place, — they were taken down every night, — and that “ something was up ; ” and, sure enough, soon afterwards we were ordered to fall in immediately, and to leave all blankets behind. I concealed mine by wrapping it about me, and buttoning my jacket and trousers over it, the garments not fitting as tightly as they did before my capture.

We were soon taken down stairs, and furnished with a haversack, containing what was called three-days' rations ; though I had to exercise great self-denial to refrain from eating them all in one day. We then formed in the street in four ranks, with guards all around us, and marched off in the dark, crossing the James on the lower or road bridge. I was strongly inclined to jump off into the river, and escape by swimming ; but the roaring of the water told that it was very rocky, and I did not dare to make the attempt, although I was quivering with jump all over.

Soon after crossing the river, we came to a train of box

freight-cars, and were put into them, about fifty into each, two guards at each door, and the top of each car covered with them. The ends of the cars were very dark, and so close that we could scarcely breathe; and some of the men crowded into the doors, thus making bad worse. The air finally grew so stifling, that I determined to cut a hole through the car; and after an hour of hard carving with a dull knife, keeping one eye on the guard, I made an aperture about two inches long and one inch wide, which improved the atmosphere, and enabled us to see a little of the outside world. It was back of a brace, and the guard did not detect the opening.

At night, while we went the distance of about ten miles, all the doors were closed on one side of the train; and we concluded we were passing something the Rebels did not wish us to see. About an hour after dark, the train stopped; and we were allowed to encamp in a little piece of woods near the track, the wood and the train being very closely encircled by guards, — so closely indeed, that, though I went all around the lines, I could see no chance to get through. I lost my single piece of bread on my rounds; but an officer found it, and gave it to me again.

CHAPTER II.

ESCAPE.

WE were put aboard the train at daybreak, and started for Danville. The hole I had cut in the car proved very useful as well as pleasant. After we had gone some way, I saw a river running side by side with the railroad, though somewhat more crooked, and, inquiring of two or three Tennessee guerilla (Union) officers, was told it was the Dan. I almost persuaded these officers to attempt to get away with me. They said they would, but did not seem inclined to start when I proposed to go: so I set out without them. I wanted them as companions, because they knew the country thoroughly; one of them having traded cattle all through that region. They talked of getting back by the way of Knoxville, and I remembered all they said.

We kept on some distance by the side of the river; and I conceived the idea of getting free in some way by its help, but formed no definite plan. The stream was muddy, and

ran rapidly ; and along its shore were a great many willows, some of them stretching far over and into the water. At about half-past eight, A.M., we arrived at a place called Barksdale Depot, about ten miles from Danville ; and there the train stopped on a turnout to wait for two other trains, and to procure wood and water. The river here ran about three rods from the railroad ; the ground sloping gradually from the track to the water, where was a perpendicular bank of five or six feet, with scarcely standing-room at the bottom.

Ten or twelve officers asked permission to go down to the river to wash their hands and faces, and it was granted ; and they started, accompanied by half a dozen guards. When I first heard the application, I determined to be one of the party, and to improve any opportunity there might be of escaping. Taking my knife and the small piece of bread left from my three-days' rations, I went with the rest, passing a little to the right of them, and farther up the river. By stooping low, I could get out of sight of the guard, as they did not stand directly on the edge of the bank. I sat down and bathed my hands and face, being tolerably long about it, and, when it seemed about time to return, looked up through the weeds, and concluded, from the behavior of the guard,

that they had not counted us, and had no idea of any one getting away.

Some of the officers had then gone back to the train. "Now, or never," I thought to myself, as I looked at the river, my heart beating heavily. Near to me was a small willow, with a large spreading stump, and roots partly covered with drift-wood ; and the river, gliding swiftly by, made its long trailing branches bow and sway in the rippling current. With a fervent but short prayer, I made up my mind to "liberty or death." At first I decided to swim off under water ; but, not being sure I could do so without making a splashing, I determined to immerse all but my face, and, crawling under the roots of the willow-tree, to take to swimming as a last resort : for, once in the water, it would be sure death to be seen by the guards. Taking a long look of every thing about me, not knowing but it might be my last, I thought of my friends at home, said another short prayer, drew a long breath, and then slid off into the river.

The icy water struck coldly through my clothes, and made me shiver ; but I did not mind it. I got under the drift stuff, keeping just enough of my face out to breathe, and then daubed my cap with the clayey mud, and put it on to

keep my black hair from showing. I had scarcely done this when I heard the order, "All those Yanks that are down thar washin', come up!" The other officers who had not already gone scrambled up the bank, and returned to the cars.

But as yet there were no sounds of the coming trains. Soon I heard some one at the cars, in a voice of authority, ask, "Are you sure all those Yanks came up?" — "Yes, we reckons they has." — "Go down and see!" said the voice again; and soon three or four sauntered along the bank. They did not see me, and returned satisfied to the train; and, my place in the cars being a dark corner, the guard had not discovered my absence. But still the trains did not come. I was chilled through and through by the cold mountain-water; but I cared little for the cold: I thought only of the train. Would it ever go?

I had to keep very quiet, because a ferry crossed the river just above, and several white men had come to the bank, and recently crossed over. After a time, which seemed an age, though it was really only twenty minutes, I heard the rumble of cars in the distance. It was a pleasant sound, and grew louder and pleasanter very fast; and soon the train arrived, and stopped at the depot; and, about the

same time, I heard the other train coming from Richmond. It also soon arrived ; and after a deal of switching backward and forward, blowing of whistles, ringing of bells, and shouting of men, all the trains got under way. As the one in which I had come went by, I heard the prisoners give a loud cheer, and thought it was for my escape, as *they* would instantly detect my absence, even if the guard did not.

Waiting until every thing was quiet, I crept out of the river, and crawled among the weeds for the water to drip from my clothing, and also for a boat to pass which was then coming up the river. When the boat had passed, I set out for a piece of woods about a quarter of a mile down the stream, taking off my jacket, that its showy dark-blue might not be seen from the depot, which was dangerously near. Wrapping my cap in my jacket, the gray lining of the jacket turned outwards, I set out, dragging myself along on my stomach, pushing my bundle before me, and making as little rustling among the weeds as possible.

Reaching the wood at last, I took off my pants, wringing the water from them, and scraping the mud off as well as I could. I was very hungry, but had eaten my bread while

in the river, being determined to enjoy all the good things of this world while they lasted.

As soon as my clothes were a little righted, I started to go back from the river, and, watching my opportunity, crossed the railroad without being seen, and then, keeping on in a north-westerly direction, and going about half a mile, came to another wood, near which was a house and outbuildings. I was anxious to look off into the country, but could find no elevated ground, and decided to hide away for the day, and at night go down to the depot, where there was probably a road leading into the country. My intention was to make my way westward to the Alleghanies, and over them to Knoxville, Tennessee, according to the programme of the officers I had conversed with on the cars.

The depot was still in sight; and I went as near to it as possible, and waited there for the darkness. I went on until I came to the edge of the wood, and then hid in a little ravine formed by a rivulet which ran under the railroad and into the river. It was then about noon, and had begun to rain; but I was already wet through, and all of a shiver. I was hungry too; for though I had gathered sassafras-leaves, and found a little apple in the brook, they did not satisfy my appetite.

The day came to an end at last ; but it was a long day of patient waiting. When it was quite dark, I started for the depot. It was still raining, but not heavily. I reached the station in safety, although a man passed within arm's-length of me as I lay hidden in a clump of bushes by the side of the road. A number of men were lounging about the station, but none of them saw me ; and I soon came to a high-road, as I had expected, or rather to half a dozen of them, forking in all directions. I chose one, and, following it a short distance, came to a brook which had to be forded, and, keeping on a little farther, reached a gate which blocked up my farther progress. This did not look much like a highway ; but I determined to keep on, and find some negro who could give me information. Scouting along, I soon stumbled upon the railroad again, and, following it a short distance, saw something of a clayey-white color alongside, and below the track. A stone I tossed down struck with a dull sound, as if on plank covered with dirt ; and concluding it was a plank-road, and that I should not be so likely to meet soldiers on it as on the railroad, I scrambled down to it, and walked rapidly forward.

It soon began to rain again, and became very dark. With nothing whatever to show the way, I soon concluded the

plank-road was a humbug; for it grew narrower and narrower, with numerous paths diverging from it, and at last ended in a path itself. There I found some sugarcane, which was very palatable. I struck then through a tobacco-field, and into a corn-field, gathering a pocketful of corn, not very hard, and very acceptable. Scouting along a fence, I soon caught sight of a gloomy-looking building just to my left, and, going very closely to it, found it to be a high log affair, with no apparent doors or windows. On its farther side, however, very low down, was an opening, through which a ruddy light was streaming. I thought it might be a blacksmith-shop; but creeping noiselessly up to the door, and looking in, I saw I was mistaken. A glowing fire was burning in the centre of the room, and beside it lay an old negro sleeping. Seeing no one else, I decided to cultivate the old man's acquaintance.

Going quietly in by the partly open door, I sat down by the fire, the negro still sleeping soundly. I warmed myself, and partly dried my clothes, scraping off some of the mud, and, sitting about ten minutes, reached over, and shook the old man by the shoulder, telling him to wake up, — as wide awake as possible. He opened his eyes, and stared at me for a while with a stupid, frightened look, but, on my

asking if he was wide awake, said, "Sartin, massa." I then told him I was a Yankee.

"*Gofry-mitey*, massa! is you a Yankee?" he cried, his eyes opening wide with astonishment. I soon convinced him I was; and he opened his heart, telling me all his grievances, —stopping frequently to express his astonishment at seeing a live Yankee, and his regret at having nothing for me to eat. He was very anxious to get me some food, and a knife also in place of mine, which he said "was no 'count."

I inquired the way to Knoxville; but he did not know where it, or Tennessee, or the Alleghanies were, but thought his son-in-law, who could read and write, would be able to tell me. The son-in-law could also give me food, and a change of clothes in place of my Federal blue. The old man gave me directions how to find him, as well as he could; but, being very old, his mind was vague and wandering. However, he was sure it was only seven miles away; and one point on the road was impressed on his mind particularly, —Sandy Creek, and the church on the hill just this side of it. These were almost the only set landmarks he could think of.

After warming myself thoroughly, I set out; the old man going a short distance to start me right. Although he

was scarcely able to walk, he directed me as well as he could to the road, and, pointing out a star — one of the very few showing themselves in the rents in the clouds — as my guide for the rest of the way, wished me all sorts of good luck, and we parted. His name was Fairborne ; and the building in which I found him was a dry-house for the curing of tobacco, called in those parts a tobacco-barn. The country is dotted all over with these buildings, some plantations having eight or ten scattered about in the fields : they are all alike, but they form quite a feature in the scenery.

I had not gone far before the heavens grew entirely black ; but I kept on as nearly as I could in the direction the old man had given. The road, he had said, was a “ lane-road ; ” that is, fenced in : and at last I came to one which I thought answered the description. My spirits grew buoyant ; and I went on with a light heart, though it had begun to rain again, and I was quite hungry. I walked some two or three miles, and then came to a fork in the road. The old man had told me not to turn to the left, as the left-hand path led to the river : so I kept to the right, and travelled on and on, crossing one broad road, and coming to the railway, where a high bridge carried the wagon-track over it. I knew the old man would have spoken of it if it had been on my route :

so I concluded I must be going wrong, and went back until I came to the road which crossed the one I was then on, and, turning to the left, went about two miles, when it, too, began to grow small, and beautifully less. Then I turned back, and into the other road again, thinking I would cross, and keep on ; but, before going half a mile, I decided to turn back, and go all the way back to the forks, and, taking the left-hand road, give that a trial.

A few dogs made a great noise as I went by the houses ; but no one was stirring ; and, after a while, I got back to where I had started. I was very tired, having walked about fifteen miles. The rain, too, was falling in torrents, and the mud was deep and heavy ; and owing to the darkness, the blinding rain, and the roughness of the road, I had stumbled continually, and fallen headlong several times. This had greatly exhausted me ; but I was not discouraged, and, after resting a while at the fork, started again, with good spirits, on the left-hand road.

I had gone only a short distance on this road before it became fully as bad if not worse than the others ; and utterly exhausted, and very faint from hunger, I lay down on some logs by the roadside, and, spite of the pouring rain, fell into a sound sleep. I awoke after a while, and feeling somewhat

stronger, although stiff and cold, started on again. Going about five miles on this road, I saw bright lights ahead, and, keeping on still farther, came among some buildings. I concluded it was near morning, and the people were milking. It was not prudent to go to them, for the overseer might be about; and the cock too, which was crowing, warned me to look about for a hiding-place for the coming day. It was, however, imperatively necessary that I should procure food; and, knowing there must be negro-cabins on the plantation, I tried to find them. Passing a number of buildings whose appearance warned me not to trust them, I came to a double cabin, where a child was crying most lustily. Pausing a moment, and listening, I heard a voice, unmistakably negro, trying to hush the child. This decided me; and I rapped at the door loudly. No answer came, and soon I rapped again; when some one inside called out, "Who's dar?"

I did not feel at liberty to tell, the other houses being too near; and in a low tone asked to be admitted.

After a long delay, and some impatient promptings from me, a person inside, named Willis, was roused up, and, with repeated urgings, induced to open the door. I slipped in, and found myself in a perfect nest of negroes of all ages,

sick, stupid, and with nothing to eat. It was a sort of hospital and nursery combined, where sick persons and very young children were bived while their parents and natural protectors were out at work. I saw at once it was no place for me, and inquired of Willis who were the tenants of the other part of the cabin. He answered, an old man and woman; and they were at home, unless out making “ ’lasses.” It appeared that what I had taken to be milking was the boiling of sorghum-syrup, and that the slave people were engaged at the work all night.

After a deal of knocking at the door, I was admitted to the other half of the cabin, and found there a middle-aged man and woman. By telling them my story, and using all my eloquence, I finally enlisted their sympathies. I asked them to conceal me in the cabin. They would not hear to that, but gave me a small piece of miserable stuff they called bread, and some sour syrup, which I ate ravenously. The food was not fit for swine; but it was the best they had, and I was very thankful for it. After I had eaten, the man proposed to hide me in the loft of the stable, under some piles of oat-straw. The stable, he said, was down in a hollow, in a direction opposite to the sorghum-mill; and as the white folks, and especially the children, would be busy at the mill

all day, I would not be likely to be disturbed. In a short time, we went there ; and I climbed up to the dark loft, and crept into the first straw I could find, intending when day broke, and I could look about me, to improve my lodgings.

I at once fell asleep, but was soon awakened by some one below calling out, "George, George !" No George appeared to be in the vicinity ; and the man soon came scrambling up into the loft. I couldn't tell by his voice whether he was white or black ; and I crept as far into the straw as I could without making a noise. Having reached the loft, the man began groping about as if in search of something. At every step he approached nearer and nearer to me, and at last put his hand right upon my shoulder. I sprang up, grappled him, told him to be silent, and then asked who he was. He said his name was Sam, and that he was looking for one of the hands whom the overseer wanted.

I told him who I was, and asked him not to betray me ; and he assured me he would not. Then I released my hold, and let him go. He appeared to be in no hurry, but sat down in the dark, and asked me all sorts of questions. At last, fearing the overseer would follow him, I asked him to leave ; and he went, first telling me to go into a far corner of the stable, and hide under a large heap of straw

to which he pointed. I got under the straw, and made as comfortable a nest as I could. Several men soon came into the stable, and chopped some of the straw and hay for fodder.

The rain had ceased falling; and after a while the sun rose beautifully, promising a fine day. I slept most of the forenoon, and in the afternoon crawled out, and cleaned some of the mud from my clothes, making them at least ten pounds the lighter. The mud I threw out of the loft door, and then went back to my nest. Soon afterwards, two men and a boy came into the stable, and up to the loft, and began chopping the straw in a chopping-machine. The boy's voice showed that he was white. I kept very still, and crept well under the straw; and it was fortunate I did so, for the boy pulled some of it from directly over me to feed the machine.

After a while they all went away, and soon afterwards the sun set. The negro who had given me the bread had promised to send a man to show me the road; and, about nine o'clock in the evening, this man came into the loft, bringing a pail of water and two pieces of warm bread, with a little piece of pork skewered on to the bread. This was very acceptable, and I ate nearly all of it. However,

the man said he could not go with me, because he had to work that night. I was very much disappointed at this, but took courage, and, deciding to make the best of my situation, got the direction as near as I could, and set out for another night of wandering.

I wandered about all night, going through almost impenetrable forests and brier-jungles, up and down steep hills, across brooks, ditches, and over ploughed ground and old corn-fields; but no road could I find. At last I lay down under a pine-tree, breaking off some boughs to keep me from the damp ground: but the night was so cold, I could not sleep; and getting up, and wandering about again, I came to a tobacco-barn, and, entering it, found the floor covered with corn-husks. Heaping some of the dryest of these husks together, I lay down upon them, and soon fell into a deep slumber.

I was at last awakened by some one opening the door of the barn. By the red light of daybreak, which shone through the chinks of the logs, I saw it was an elderly white man, carrying a basket on each arm. Passing me so closely, that, by reaching out, I could have touched him, he made his way to the back of the barn, and filled his basket with corn, of which there was a little pile in that part of the

building. Having done this, he went away, passing again closely to me without giving any sign of recognition. I was covered with husks to my waist; and the lining of my jacket, which I wore outside, was of about the color of dried corn-leaves. I kept perfectly still, and felt somewhat relieved when he closed the door, but not entirely at ease. He might, perhaps, have seen me, and have gone to bring help. Springing up, I caught sight of him passing round a corner of a wood. I followed, intending to set my mind at rest; and soon saw him go to a house surrounded by sheds and outbuildings of all shapes and sizes, and begin to do up his morning chores. This satisfied me that all was right.

An old apple-tree stood near; and under it were a few windfalls which had not been deemed worth picking: these I confiscated, and went back to the barn. By the daylight, I discovered there was a scaffolding built on the cross-pieces upon which the tobacco was hung to dry. It was covered with bundles of corn-leaves; and, climbing up to it, I broke my fast on the bit of bread I had left, and some of the apples, and, after that, fell asleep again.

I soon heard voices outside, and, looking through a crevice, saw the same old man and three children picking peas in

an adjoining field. Every little while the children would pass by with loaded baskets, carrying them down to the woods beyond. I had begun to think the road to Danville was a myth, — a kind of will-o'-the-wisp, — and wanted to look for it in the daylight, and so be rid of the terrible indefiniteness and doubt of night-tramping: so, watching an opportunity when the children had disappeared down the wood-path, I slipped out, and, the door being on the side away from the man, got away unseen.

I scouted along in what seemed to be the right direction, hoping to come upon some negro who would show me the road, but met none until it was quite dark. I had struck a narrow road, and decided to follow it; when, looking back, I saw a horseman coming, and changed my mind. Concealing myself in a ditch, I waited for him to go by. He was a young man, mounted on a stout sorrel horse.

Crossing the road, I then kept along near it, in the woods, and took my way to the top of a high hill not far distant, wishing to get a view of the country to the south-west. Very many trees obstructed the view from the crest of the hill: but beyond it was another and comparatively bare hill; and, although there was a house upon it, I determined to reconnoitre it, and see if I could not discover the road to Dan-

ville. Going into a ravine, and crawling down on the other side, I soon discovered that the house was deserted. I had a very extensive view from an upper window, but could see nothing but the same old things, — round hills and tobacco-barns, and round hills and pine-woods ; the former the more numerous of the two. The only moving thing in sight was a flock of sheep about half a mile away.

I did not like the appearance of things in that direction, and went back to the road, gathering a few ripe fox-grapes on the way. The road looked much smaller than when I left it ; and, seeing a few houses a quarter of a mile away, I concluded it had forked between where I left it and where I came upon it again. I started back for the fork, but had not gone far before I came to a road branching to the right ; and thinking it might lead to the main road, if there were any, I turned into it, and was walking carelessly along, when I came directly upon a tobacco-barn. I was very near to it ; when suddenly a white man walked out, and commenced handing tobacco to some one inside. Falling on the ground, I drew myself slowly and quietly back, and managed, without being seen, to get to a little hollow, deep enough to conceal my body. I lay there, and watched ; and soon a team passed laden with tobacco, and soon afterwards

a little negro boy ran by within half a yard of me. I was afraid he had seen me, and would tell the people at the barn ; so I crawled back still farther, but not out of sight of the barn : and soon an old white hound, which had followed the boy, came and made friends with me.

I determined to speak to the negroes when they should return ; and after they had unloaded the tobacco, and started back, I ran out, and jumped upon their wagon. They looked at me with great astonishment, but with a bit of a smile lurking in the corners of their eyes. I asked them if they knew what kind of an individual I was. They laughed, and looked at one another with knowing looks, but said nothing. They were two quite pretty girls, a young man, and the boy. I told them who I was, and what I wanted. The girls asked if I was married ; and, when I told them I was not, they said they were glad, for it was bad enough that the old folks should worry about me. They were very inquisitive, and asked very sensible questions.

I rode to the tobacco-field with them ; and they told me to hide in a wooded ravine near by until night, and to come up then to the stable near the house, and they would give me something to eat, and full directions how to find the wished-for road.

I waited until night in the wood, and, while waiting, saw one of the girls come down, and pass very near to me, and then come back again. Concluding from her movements that she was searching for me, I gave a low whistle ; when she approached, and told me I must not go to the stable, but to a straw-stack some distance in the rear.

As soon as it was dark, I went there, and crouching down between one of the stacks and a little pen, and waiting a while, heard a man coming from the house, singing in that weird and doleful style peculiar to the slaves of the South. He laughed when he found me, saying he did not know but I might be kept away by the fear of betrayal. I said I could trust him ; for he was too smart to betray one of his best friends to his worst enemies. He saw the matter in that light precisely.

We sat a while under the stack while I ate a hearty supper of the food he had brought, — some fresh milk, sorghum-syrup, and warm corn-bread. He kept a respectful silence while I was eating, but overwhelmed me with questions about the state of affairs at the North, and more particularly about the plans and feelings of the Government with regard to the negro, as soon as I said my hunger was satisfied. I was surprised at the good sense he showed,

and answered him very carefully and conscientiously. One of the man's friends soon came by, and asked him to go a-hunting; and, not wishing the other to know I was there, he pretended to be pulling straw out of the stack, and told his friend to go to the stable, and wait for him there.

Soon afterwards I bade him good-by, and started with a light heart for the road, which, it appeared, was a mile and a half or two miles to the northward. There was a new moon and a bright starlight, and they made the way pleasant. When near the road, I met about a dozen negroes, and, as I passed, heard one of them say, "Why, he'm a white man!" My jacket was wrong side out, and it was not light enough for my blue trousers to be seen. I judged from appearances that they had been to some religious meeting.

At last I found the road I had been so long looking for. It seemed like an old friend; and I started towards Danville, feeling that every step brought me nearer to freedom. Going about a mile, I came to the church, which the old negro had said was near to Sandy Creek; and was so glad to see it, and to know that I was on my right way, that I took off my hat to it as I went by. Soon afterwards I came to the creek, and, with a light heart,

kept on, passing two tobacco-barns on the left, and a plantation with its village of cabins and outbuildings on the right.

Not long afterwards, I reached the plantation I had so long been in pursuit of. The sky was somewhat cloudy; and, the buildings being among a dense grove of trees, I could not tell one from another. After wandering about, and waking up all the dogs, I decided to go back to the road, and wait until the dogs had stopped howling. Going about two miles towards Danville, I turned back, and went in once more among the buildings, but soon became utterly confused again. They seemed of all shapes and sizes, and to face in all directions. Coming at last to one which did not look stylish enough for white folks, nor yet poor enough for negroes, I decided to knock at its door, and trust to luck to extricate me if I should get into difficulty. A dog at the steps jumped up, and barked and growled at me furiously; but I knocked, and presently a very tall, middle-aged man, arrayed in shirt and drawers, came to the door.

I told him I wanted to see Bob Bunyan; that I was on my way to Danville, and had seen his father-in-law a short distance back, who had desired me to stop, and tell

Bob that he was sick, and wanted him to go to him. This seemed to satisfy the man; and he told me to go right down the path, and I would come to Bob's cabin. I went on, and soon came to another house just like the first, and, supposing it to be the cabin, knocked at the door. A dog sprang up, and I thought he would go distracted. He made a horrid din; but above it I at last distinguished a sharp voice, asking who I was, and what I wanted. I said, if she would stop the dog's noise, I would tell her; and she screamed out again, "Who be ye? Is ye a white man, or a nigger?"

I told her I was a white man who wanted to see Bob Bunyan. "Lucky ye told me that just as ye did, or I'd ha' put a load into ye, shore. I don't see what a white man wants with a nigger anyhow."

I told her the same story I had told the man; and she said she would tell Bob in the morning. I proposed to save her the trouble; but she cried again, "I'd like to know who ye be!" Being tired of shouting above the uproar of the dogs, and thinking the woman might learn too accurately who I was if I remained much longer, I made no reply, but started across a piece of ploughed ground in what I supposed was the direction of the road.

Coming to a zig-zag fence, I crept along the top of it for some distance, and then sprang into the road on the other side: by this means I expected to balk the scent of the dogs if they undertook to track me; and I was sure they would, because men were moving about with lights, shouting, and making a great noise on the plantation.

Springing upon the fence again, I started back toward the creek until I came to the next plantation. The houses and cabins were on the right of the road, and some shops and stables were on the left. I went into one of these stables, and by climbing up, and feeling overhead, found at last a door opening into the loft above. I expected to find some hay and straw in which to lie down and conceal myself; but there was not enough for the latter purpose; and, after resting a while, I evacuated the stable, and kept on toward the creek.

I soon came to a tobacco-barn, on the right of the road, and, going into it, hid behind a pile of straw. I was tired enough to sleep: but the rats ran over me, and nibbled at my hair and shoes whenever I was quiet; and I was forced to lie awake. I staid there until about the middle of the following afternoon, and then saw a man at work at another barn, about a quarter of a mile distant.

He might be a negro: so I decided to go down the road and ascertain. I did so, and, getting near enough to see he was of the loyal color, whistled, and beckoned him to come over to the road. I inquired if there was any one working with him, and he said no; and I then told him who I was, and that I wanted to see Bob Bunyan.

He advised me to hide in the barn, and promised to bring me some food at night, and go with me to Bob's house. The plantation mansion was in sight; but it was located in a deep hollow, and some distance off: and going into the barn, and seeing it would be a good hiding-place, I decided to follow the negro's advice. There was a scaffolding in the barn, built upon poles, about as high as a man's head, and covered thick with sugar-cane-seed spread out to dry; and under this scaffolding was a quantity of straw and fodder. I made a nest in this fodder, in the back part of the barn, under the scaffolding; and at night the man came, bringing another with him by the name of Justin. After conversing a while, the first negro accompanied me to see Bob.

I found this earnestly-sought individual not much of a man after all, and was not a little disappointed. He

appeared to have no decision of character. I asked him what he knew about the road to Knoxville; and his answers were indefinite and unsatisfactory. He had no clothes, but thought he could get some if I could wait until Sunday, when he should go over to his wife's house. I asked the other man where I had better stay, and he advised me to remain in the barn. I went there, and, snuggling again into my bed of straw, slept soundly.

Bunyan told me he could not imagine who it was that had made such an ado the night before at the plantation. He said they tried to track me, but lost the trail after going about two miles. The dogs could not find it again: they did not once think of my going upon the fence.

October seventh was the anniversary of my enlistment. Three years in the service! No event worth mention happened during the day. I kept very close, and at night received some food from the negro. The day was very cold; and a strong north wind came through the chinks of the logs, making my straw-bed an airy one.

October eighth. — Nothing occurred this day worth noting. The weather was again cold, and the wind as high as during the previous day.

October ninth. — This was Sunday, and it blew a hurricane. The day was again very cold, and the barn much exposed. I went into the road, hoping to find some place sheltered from the wind, and perhaps some nuts or fruit; for the negroes did not bring me as much food as my hunger demanded. I had quite a pleasant tramp, and did not return to the barn until late in the afternoon. Then I ascended the scaffolding to eat some sugar-cane I had gathered; and while sitting there, stripping off the tough outside, and eating the sweet pith of the cane, a shadow darkened the door, the top of which was about on a level with my seat. Looking down, I saw standing in the entrance a portly, well-dressed old man, with a fat, florid face, blue eyes, and long, silvery white hair. He wore gold eye-glasses, and carried a gold-headed cane. I did not dare to move. He peered about under the scaffolding at his fodder, and then, standing on tiptoe, looked up to the platform to see how his cane-seed was thriving. It was somewhat dark, and he did not see me at first; but, when he did, he started, and cried out, "Hello!"

I echoed the salutation.

"You're a soldier, I reckon?" he said.

“Yaas,” I answered, imitating the voice of a Southerner. “I b’long ter the Seventh Looisiana. I’m gwine on down ter Danville : got some tired, and thought I’d come in here ter rest.”

“Ah!” he exclaimed, “you’ve been in a good many battles, I suppose?”

“Wall, not many,” I replied. “I’ve served mostly under Dick Taylor and Breckenridge, and haven’t fit much ’cept skirmishin’. Jist been fightin’ up in the valley right smart.”

“Ah! were you in that battle? Well, the Yankees rather got the best of ye there, didn’t they?”

“Yaas, they used us pretty rough,” I answered. “We got licked, and no mistake; but the Yanks was three to our one.”

“Yes, I suppose they were,” he replied. “Where’s your regiment?”

“Wall,” I answered, “thar aren’t much on it left, and most of them are on extra duty, or some detail or other, — clerks or wagoners, or some sich. You see, as the Yanks hold our State, we don’t git no recruits.”

“Well how do the Yanks treat the folks down in Louisiana?”

“ Oh ! as wall as you could expect in war-times from such a blasted thievin’ set. The Yanks are a pack of thieves anyhow.”

“ That’s so ! ” he replied. “ Have you heard the news from Danville ? ”

“ No,” I answered : “ I’ve just come down from the valley, and haven’t heard much.”

“ They’re making the Yanks work on the intrenchments,” he said. “ They licked a Yank nigger to death there the other day for not working. He said he wouldn’t work. They said they’d whip him until he did. He wouldn’t, and they whipped him until he died. And I think they served him right ; don’t you ? ”

I felt like springing on the old scoundrel, but, after a moment’s hesitation, said, “ Yaas : they must be kept under.” This seemed to satisfy him. We conversed some time longer ; and he asked me about the cultivation of sugar-cane and the making of sugar. I told him what little I knew about it, which was much more than he knew. He then wanted to know what part of Louisiana I came from ; and I told him from about twelve miles west of Franklin, — Bayou Tèche County.

He then asked if I thought there would be a frost the

coming night. He feared his tobacco would spoil; and, if he thought there would be one, he would set his hands to work, notwithstanding it was the Sabbath, — their regular holiday. I told him I thought it too windy for a frost; not caring, of course, whether there was one or not, except that perhaps I would have preferred to have had his tobacco spoiled. He asked what I thought about the Northern election; and I answered that I didn't agree with the mass of the people on that subject, and thought Lincoln would be elected. "And so do I," said he.

He had seated himself, and I thought he would never go. I had slipped off my jacket while talking with him, and put it on again wrong side out, and asked him in a careless way if he thought it would hurt the cane-seed to lie on it. He said no, he did not think it would. "Well," I said, "I reckon I'll take a nap;" and I flung myself down in a very exhausted manner.

"I reckon you are pretty tired," he said. "Yes," I answered, "very." — "Are your feet very sore?" — "Yes, I am in a bad way with my feet; but I reckon I kin get ter Danville without much trouble." I didn't say any thing more; and presently he rose, and said he reckoned he would go out and look at his tobacco.

When he was finally gone, I got down from the loft and watched him. He crossed the road, and went over into a field, but not quite out of sight: soon he came back, and I climbed up on the platform again. He looked in at the door; but I was very soundly asleep, and did not hear him. Apparently satisfied, he went off toward the house; but before he got there I was out of the barn, and well out of the way. I walked on the top of the road-fence for some distance to balk the scent of dogs, and then scouted back through the woods to the other side of the farm; for the negro was to bring my clothing that evening, and I wanted to see about some other things which the man Justin had suggested. I was near the Dan River, and, in conversations with this man, had ascertained that the town of Weldon was on the Roanoke River, into which the Dan emptied. I knew that a railroad ran from Weldon to Petersburg, and thought, if I could reach the former place, I should not miss my way nor waste all my energy, as I had done, in a fruitless search for the right road. Justin had told me I might get a chance to go down the river on a boat; and that he knew of one, the owner of which would be glad to help me.

Justin's cabin had been pointed out to me the night I went

to Bunyan's ; and, when it was fully dark, I went to it. We were expecting Bunyan to come there. He was not there ; but Justin was, and received me very cordially. He told me that the boat he had in mind would start down the river early in the morning, and, about midnight, suggested that something should be done towards changing my Union for Rebel regimentals. He had a pair of homespun trousers, nearly new, which he gave me in place of my worn blue ones, and a coat which would answer the emergency, but had nothing in the way of a hat or a cap. The vizor was gone from mine, however ; and it would not be likely to betray its character.

When I was finally dressed in the new toggery, Justin gave me a sash for my waist, and, with a gleeful exclamation, declared my disguise perfect. Filling then my pockets with bread and sweet-potatoes, and wishing me all kinds of good luck, he and his family bade me good-by.

The boat was at the ferry at the town of Milton, N.C., about five miles distant. Justin gave me full directions how to find it ; and, as the moon was shining brightly, I had a very pleasant walk : but, when I reached the river, I found it covered with a dense fog, which hid the opposite bank, and all but a narrow strip of the water. Nothing was on this side but an old sunken skiff. I hallooed several times, but

no one answered ; and, it being very cold and damp, I cast about for some shelter. A shanty stood on the river bank, but it was locked ; and so I started back on the road to find some place into which I might crawl, and sleep until day-break.

The moon had by this time set, and it was quite dark. Walking a mile, I came to a branch road ; but going upon it, and finding no shelter, I hurried back in disgust, and, again taking to the ferry-road, went on a little farther. Soon seeing something large and black over in a field, I climbed the fence, and found a rick of cornstalks. They were stacked very compactly, and I could not make a hole large enough to get into, but did the best I could, and lay just long enough to ascertain that I should freeze if I remained a minute longer. I then rose, and, as soon as my legs grew limber, started back into the road.

The air was very cold, and a thick white frost covered every thing. Going a short distance farther, I came to some houses, and, walking in quietly among them, saw smoke and sparks coming from the chimney of a cabin. I went to the door, and knocked ; was admitted, and made love to the fire immediately. Five negroes, three men and two women, were in the room, — a man and his wife sitting by the fire, the

rest lying in bed. It was curious ; but one of the men was the boatman I was in pursuit of. He told me the boat was going only a few miles down the river, and that it was hardly worth my while to go with them ; but I might do so if I chose. I was tired with waiting, and determined to go as far as they went, and then strike out on my own responsibility : so, when he went down to the river, I went with him. After a while, his comrade came : he was a smart, sensible fellow ; and I took a liking to him at once, which I had not done to the other.

It was now sunrise, and the fog had begun to clear away. George, the new-comer, advised me to wait until the next Friday or Saturday, when he should go down to Weldon, a hundred and eighty miles, and would take me all the way, and provide me with food. He thought I had better go back to Justin's cabin, that being a quiet place, which the planter did not often visit. I decided to do as he recommended, and, to give my disguise a trial, went by daylight.

October tenth. — I met a good many negroes on the road, and a few white people ; and a smart young darky, coming along with a fast mule-team, asked me to ride. I jumped into his wagon ; and soon a large red-faced man, on a powerful horse, rode by. Raising my cap, I said " Good day " in

the most approved Southern style ; and the man returned the salutation very graciously. The negro told me he was a bitter rebel by the name of Carnigan, a planter from Vicksburg, whence he had been driven by Grant with the loss of all his slaves and other property.

Soon afterward we passed a house, on the porch of which were several white men with rifles. Some horses, with arms slung to their saddles, were tied at the gateway. The men sprang up when they caught sight of me ; but as we rode by at a rapid pace, and I appeared unconcerned, they settled down again. I was not unconcerned, however ; and, as soon as we came to a piece of woods, I jumped from the wagon, and took to cover, being of opinion they would follow me as soon as they had thought the matter over. I told the negro I was going to Danville, which was a good excuse for leaving the wagon.

Shaping my course for the plantation, I went on as far as appeared to be prudent, and then laid down under a zig-zag fence, and slept long and quietly. At night I went to Justin's cabin. He and his wife were surprised, but delighted, to see me. He consented to let me sleep in his cabin of nights, and proposed to give me a piece of bread every day. I laid down on a coat which he spread before the fire, and, in

spite of the vigorous attacks of an army of "clinkers," slept soundly until daybreak.

In the morning I went out to my place under the fence, broke off pine-tips for a carpet, and arranged brush to conceal my snuggerly from any but prying eyes. It was very tedious lying there under the fence, and it seemed that the sun never would set. I had to lie quietly; for on all sides people were passing, and in front of me, across a ravine, a plantation was in plain sight.

October twelfth. — This day was as quiet and as tedious as the previous one. In the course of it, I dug some sweet-potatoes from the patch of the planter, and at night roasted them at the fire of his slave.

October thirteenth. — This day was as void of incident as yesterday, except that I had a caller. While lying flat on my back, I heard a rustling near by, and, raising myself on my elbow, saw a large, vicious-looking snake crawling through the fence, not a yard from my head. He had crept through before he saw me, but then, stopping instantly, lifted his head, and glared at me with his large black and brilliant eyes. I returned his rather impolite gaze; but he stared me out of countenance; and I lay down again in disgust, keeping an eye on him. He did not move a hair's-breadth for two mortal

hours. I tired of his impudence at last, and tried to make him move by throwing chips at him. I imagined he was Petersburg, and shelled him vigorously ; but, though I hit him once or twice, he did not so much as wink. I could see signs of temper now and then in a slight flattening of his head, and a more fiery glare of his eyes ; but he did not move an inch, only kept his ugly eye fixed on mine. At last, near sunset, I heard him moving : he went off, keeping on his original course very slowly, and not taking his eyes from me until he was yards away. At night I described him to the negroes ; and they said he was a “ highland moccason,” and deadly poisonous. I did not attempt to kill him, because I might have exposed myself by rising ; and why he did not return my attack, I cannot conjecture.

October fourteenth—This day passed somewhat like the day before ; only my caller was a huge hog, whom I could not persuade to stop long. I did not go to sleep, lest I might wake and find my friend of yesterday in too close proximity. Most snakes like to snuggle to something warm ; and Monsieur Moccason might taste of me if I should disturb him too rudely.

At night I went to the cabin to take a final leave of my friends. The negroes had killed and nicely cooked a

chicken for my journey. I bade them good-by with feelings in which regret was mingled, and once more started for the ferry. Arriving at the house where I had before seen the boatman, I learned that the boat had not as yet come up the river; but they expected it in the morning: so I staid there all night.

October fifteenth. — In the morning, a mulatto girl named Mattie took me to a barn, in the loft of which was a parcel of corn-husks. The barn was not used for stock, and the negroes thought it would be a good hiding-place; and, when the boatmen came, they would tell them where I was, and send them to me. I remained in the barn all day, and towards night saw the two boatmen coming towards it; but several white children, and a white man on horseback talking with the children, were in the road directly opposite, and I could not show myself to the negroes without being seen by the white man. One of the men went to the house, and the other — the one I did not particularly fancy — sat down by the roadside. The white man rode away, and then the children began talking to the negro. I came down from the loft, and, when the children were not looking, waved my cap to the man. He saw me, and motioned me back out of

sight. I hid myself, hoping he would, as soon as the children went away, come to me.

Keeping watch of him, I soon saw the other man come out of the house, and join him in the road, and knew by his looks that he did not say any thing to the other of my being there, for fear he might turn back, and attempt to speak to me. He did not wish me any harm, but was afraid he might get into trouble by aiding me.

When night came, I went to the cabin, and asked the negroes what they had said ; but they were all away when the men called, and had not seen them at all. I felt somewhat disheartened ; but, ascertaining from Mattie that the boatmen lived where I had passed the armed men on the porch, I determined to go there and see them, although it was four miles away. Going first to the ferry, and finding the boatmen not there, I about-faced, and started for the house. A bright moon was shining, and objects were plainly visible ; and, when I had gone about half a mile, two white men came right upon me. One of them, in passing, said, "Seen anybody down to the ferry?" I answered, "No, I haven't seen anybody," rather quickly, and without the Southern drawl which I had thus far practised. I kept

on my way ; and, after a moment's hesitation, they kept on theirs.

A brisk walk in the moonlight brought me to the house. The lights were not yet out in the mansion ; but, going to the negro cabins, — making a circuit without being seen, — I found George, the boatman, who to my great disappointment told me he was not going down the river. The load he had been engaged to carry had been given to another boat at a lower price. “ He certainly should go down soon ; but it might be in two weeks, or it might be in a month.” I inquired if he knew of any canoe I could get ; and, after a few minutes' hesitation, he said that he did, and told me to go down to the ferry, and halloo for John Randolph, who was in a boat on the farther side. Randolph would give me a canoe, and also tell me all about the navigation of the river. George then gave me some warm corn-bread, and told me to tell Randolph to make me more. I thanked him warmly, for I felt I was making a long stride towards liberty, and with light and happy steps started for the ferry.

There I called “ John Randolph ” several times ; and at last he came across in his boat. Instantly I felt a respect for him, which was not at all lessened on further acquaint-

ance. He was a free negro, and commander of the boat. "George" was his right-hand man, and the other — "Aleck" — was his left, and a poor left at that, and therefore only occasionally used.

John was a fine-looking fellow, of about medium size, but well-formed and vigorous. His features were finely cut, his eyes piercing, and his whole appearance indicated true manhood. I told him every thing; and he said that two men who crossed the ferry not long before had told him they met a Yankee back on the road, whom they would have captured had he not been armed to the teeth. They were the two Confederate soldiers, and there was some truth in what they said, — my only weapon being an eating-knife. John said the town was in quite a panic, and thought itself already half murdered.

He soon bestirred himself to make the bread, while I sat under the canvas of the boat. Leaving the bread on the fire, he told me all about the river, with which he was very familiar. I listened attentively, and repeated after him what he said, until I felt sure of not forgetting it.

I was to travel only by night. There were several bad falls in the river, which would bother me a good deal. John gave me instructions how to pass them, and advised my

stopping at a plantation belonging to a widow lady some distance below, and finding a colored man of the name of Jenkins, who would tell me more of the river, and furnish me with more food if I was in need of it. I was to watch the right bank of the river for a bold projecting ledge, immediately opposite to which I should find a canoe-landing, and a path leading to the plantation, which was about half a mile inland. About a hundred and twenty miles down the river, at Taylor's Ferry, was a negro named Goler. I must not trust him. He was a "mean cuss." He had betrayed a party of United-States soldiers who had stopped at his house to rest. He went out on pretence of getting something for them to eat, and brought instead a party of Confederate soldiers.

We conversed on a great many topics, and he showed great good sense on all. I asked him why he did not escape to the North; and his answer was, that his wife and children could not accompany him, and he could not leave them. After conversing a while, he returned to the fire to see if the cakes were done. They were; and, washing off the ashes, he gave them to me, remarking that he wished he had some meat also, but that it was a scarce article in "them parts." He then set out to find the canoe. It was not

where he thought it; but, going farther down, we came to a creek, a few rods up which two boats were fastened to the shore. They were both "dug-outs," and one of them was a very large one. John advised me to take the larger one, although it had a hole in each end, because it was so wide it would not upset easily. Afterwards, when in the fierce rapids, I had reason to commend his judgment. He mentioned several places on the river where Rebel guards were stationed for the very purpose of arresting men like myself. They would be the only great obstacle in my way; and, if I could elude them, I need anticipate little other difficulty. Barksdale Depot, South Boston, Myrie Creek, and a few other places, were the only points guarded; and it was possible to get by them, and that possibility gave me assurance of success..

CHAPTER III.

INLAND NAVIGATION.

HE soon had the canoe ready ; and putting in a long setting-pole, a scoop to bail out water, and a long paddle, he told me to sit on the extreme end. I entered it and took the seat, but was obliged to move forward, as the water poured in at the hole, which was large enough to put my head through. Moving a little forward, however, I brought the lower edge of the hole just out of water. Another hole, of about the same size, was in the bow ; but it was not quite so low down, and did not give me any trouble. I had never paddled in my life, but had read of canoe trips, and remembered that a canoe is kept on a straight course by a twist of the paddle as it leaves the water.

It was about midnight when I bade good-by to the noble colored man. He stood on the bank, looking after me, and wishing me all good fortune. Trying the experiment of paddling, I soon got the knack, and propelled the great

unwieldy boat with steady strokes, making it glide through the water at a rapid rate. A bright moon was shining, and I went along finely.

About eight miles below was Barksdale Depot, where I had escaped from the cars, and where John told me was a Rebel guard. Paddling about an hour and a half, I came to the island which divides the river just above this depot, and, passing to the right, soon saw the station-house. Bearing to the shore, and tipping the canoe, so the side towards the depot was wet, and of the same color as the river, I lay down in the bottom, with my arm hanging over the side, and trailing the paddle in the water. The moon cast a dark but narrow shadow close under the bank, and my safety might depend on keeping within this shadow. To do that, it was necessary to trail the paddle, and by quick, vigorous, but perfectly noiseless movements, keep the canoe headed straight down the river; and also to avoid any snags or outstretching branches.

Using the utmost caution, I glided down to the depot slowly, and in perfect quiet. I could see in the indistinct moonlight shadowy forms on the bank, and could hear voices in low converse a little below the station-house. Directly opposite where I first escaped was an eddy, into

which the canoe entered, and for a time scarcely moved. I was still in view of the persons on the bank; and, if the eddy should whirl the canoe out into the stream, they would surely observe me. Dipping the paddle-blade deep down, I gave a strong pull; then, turning the edge of the paddle down stream, slid it forward, and gave another strong, noiseless pull. The boat obeyed the command, and started gently forward, and, after ten or twelve rods of this kind of navigation, passed a bend in the river. Then I halted again, and rising, and resuming my paddle properly, kept on, feeling that I had made a long stride toward home, although only a few rods from the spot where I had escaped nearly two weeks before.

The river ran very slowly for a long distance; and, being pretty well tired, I did not make much headway, — not so much as I thought. John had told me that the widow lived eight miles beyond Barksdale Depot; and, after rowing a long time, I began to look for the ledge of rocks he had mentioned. I saw ledges, but none that answered his description; and I went on and on, but no canoe-landing appeared, and the cocks were already crowing. At last the rosy flush of day lit the sky, and I decided to haul up into the first good place of concealment; for I expected

pursuit. The disappearance of the canoe, coupled with the fact of my being seen by the two whites, would, I thought, make a strong case against me.

I watched the shore narrowly, and, just before the sun rose, came to a place which promised to hide me. A luxuriant growth of willows was on the shore, some of them reaching far out over the river, and dipping into the water. Hauling the canoe in among these willows, I broke off a few of the branches, and, placing them along its sides as if they were growing there, concealed it completely from any but the sharpest eyes. Taking out my pieces of bread, I hid them in a willow stump, and then started back from the river to take some observations.

No houses were in sight ; but I saw many cultivated fields with numerous belts and patches of wood. Passing through one of these belts, I came upon a tobacco-barn, and, on close inspection, found it empty. Near it were some ripe persimmons, which proved quite a treat. Going on a little farther, I saw the chimneys of a house away off upon a hill, and, returning to see that my boat was safe, set out to reconnoitre the plantation. A shallow brook ran from the direction of the house ; and I followed it, except where it

was too open, passing a granite quarry of as good and clear stone as I ever saw.

Coming to the house, I scouted along the farther side of the brook in a little strip of bushes until I came to a road running parallel with the river. Waiting here a few minutes, I saw a young negro coming down the lane with some horses. He stopped at the brook, watered the horses, and was turning to go back, when I whistled to him. He knew enough to make no demonstration, and, quietly turning about, fastened his horses, and came to where I was. I knew I could trust him, and did so.

He said the widow's place was about three miles farther down the river. He asked if I was hungry, and, on my saying I wanted provisions, went back to the house, and brought me some food. Telling him to be "mum," I bade him good-by, and returned to the river. I found the canoe all right; and feeling very tired in body, and easy in mind, lay down in a cornfield near the river, — but not near enough to be seen, — and had a quiet sleep. I slept until the afternoon, and awoke much refreshed. Then I took a lunch of bread and water, and, after a good wash in the river, felt "as good as new." While we were encamped near Fisher's Hill, just after my capture, one of my men gave me a comb;

and, when I came out of the water, I combed my hair with it, and had a quiet laugh all to myself, thinking of the stunning toilets of some of my gentlemen friends at home.

Feeling somewhat restless, I soon set out on a scout down the river, and, going about a mile, could see at least a mile farther. No houses were in sight ; and it occurred to me that I might safely set out before nightfall : so, putting my things back into the boat, I pushed out into the stream.

The afternoon was beautiful ; and, if I had not been so pre-occupied, I should have enjoyed the trip exceedingly. As it was, I was not entirely blind to the beauty of the scenery. The long, bright curves of the river reflected faithfully the rocks, trees, and wooded hills on its banks, all aflame with the gorgeous hues of autumn ; and above, the bright sun, the golden, fleecy clouds, and the far-off, beautiful blue, combined to form a picture I shall never forget. I could not realize there could be war in such a beautiful place ; but reason told me that any one of those grand old trees or rocks might hide an enemy, whose greatest joy would be my death.

I rowed along, all my senses on the alert, and, going about two miles, went on shore to reconnoitre. I could hear the roar of falls below, and thought it best to see if

there were any houses near the bank. Pulling the canoe under the overhanging branches of a weeping-willow, I crept up the left bank, and crawling through the high, dense weeds, saw a broad extent of country, and, half a mile away, the railroad, and the cars just passing towards Danville.

I went down the bank, plunging along through the dense weeds; but the trees were so thick, that I could get no good view of the river. I climbed one, which reached far out over the water; but a great many others reached out as far, and I could see nothing but the swift current boiling and surging below. Making my way back, I found my boat so well hidden, that I had difficulty in finding it myself. I deliberated whether to go on or not, but finally concluded to lie down, and try to get another nap. After a while, I heard voices and an occasional shot. They were sportsmen, shooting birds, and, had I gone on, might have shot game I should not have relished.

After a while, the sun set; and, as soon as it was fully dark, I started. The canoe bounded along in the swift current, and such quantities of water came in through the holes that it was well-nigh water-logged; but, after a while, I pulled up in a quiet place, and repaired damages. A little

farther on, I came to other rapids; but they were not as fierce as the first. Going about a quarter of a mile in these rapids, I came to an immense, overhanging ledge, which I thought was the one John Randolph had spoken of, and, looking to the left, could distinguish something like boats fastened to the right bank. I almost despaired of crossing the current in my great bungling ark, and had half a mind not to make the attempt; but things ahead looked so very squally and indefinite, that I at last started.

For about ten minutes I strained every muscle, and made not a rod of headway, though the water foamed from the strokes of the paddle, and the canoe reeled and tumbled about like a drunken man; but at last I reached the right bank, and got a view up the river for two or three rods beyond the boat-landing. Clinging to the shore a few minutes to get breath, I started again, and, as the current was not quite so rapid under the bank, reached the landing with comparative ease. Springing out, I fastened the boat, and, taking my treasure of bread in my hand, started up the bank in a well-beaten path which apparently led to the widow's plantation.

Going about half a mile, and crossing the railroad on the route, I came to a grove of trees, and, following the path

around its farther side, found a quantity of barns, sheds, and straw-stacks, and, a little farther on, some buildings which looked like negro-cabins. Only one of them showed signs of life ; but from the door of that a bright light was shining far out into the thick darkness. A high fence was between it and myself ; and climbing it, and approaching nearer, I obtained a good view of the house. I did not like its looks. It seemed too good for negroes, and not good enough for white people ; but, stepping very lightly, I went right up to the door, and tried to see who was in it. I could see no one, but could hear dishes rattling as if persons were eating. On some pegs, near the door, straw-hats, sun-bonnets, and similar articles, were hanging.

Not satisfied with this inspection, I started to go round the house, hoping to discover some windows ; and, as I started, a little bit of gravel crunched under my foot, and a dog inside set up a most hideous howling. I was too near to run : so, putting a bold face on the matter, I walked up to the door, and rapped. A loud voice, unmistakably white, asked, “ Who’s thar ? What do you want ? Who be ye ? ”

I walked in, and saw a large, powerful man sitting at a table, and said to him, “ You didn’t ask me to come in ; but I will, and tell you what I want.”

I told him I was on my way to News Depot, but, coming across the country to shorten the distance, had got lost, and would be much obliged if he would direct me. I imitated the Southern dialect as well as I could, and the man seemed unsuspicious of my true character. He went to the fence with me, and pointed down the path up which I had come, as the way to News Depot. I knew it as well as he, but, pretending to be greatly relieved, thanked him, and started off. When I reached the top of the hill, — twenty rods or more from the house, — I paused, but kept my feet in motion as if still walking. Gradually I made less and less noise, and, when it was time to be out of hearing, stopped altogether. I did this to keep an eye on the movements of the man, who might be bent on mischief. He re-entered the house, and did not come out of it again : so I concluded that all was right, and walked forward on tip-toe until really out of hearing.

I found the boat safe where I had left it. The moon had just risen ; but a dense fog covered the river, and the air was cold and wintry. I thought I would not start until the moon was higher, and laid down in the boat to rest a while : but it was too cold and damp to sleep ; and at last I got up,

and went inland to see if I could not do better than I did before.

I had seen a tobacco-barn standing in the open field, on the right of the path leading to the railroad, and decided to have a nearer look at it. I found it empty, and the apparent resort of cattle. I laid down in a corner on the ground : but the cold was too much for me, ill-fed as I was ; and I came near shivering myself to pieces. I bore it as long as I could, and then started out to see if I could not find warmer lodgings.

Another barn was a short distance off ; but, on going to it, I found it quite as comfortless as the other ; and, scouting around a while longer, I concluded to make another trial at the plantation. Taking a little path which turned off to the left, and following it some time, I came upon a log-stable. It was not far from the overseer's house, and I was careful not to make any noise. I tried to find some negro-cabins ; but gave up the search at last, and climbed into the stable. It was locked below, but had an open door aloft, up to which I clambered by the chinks in the logs. A quantity of rye-straw was in one corner : I snuggled into it, and, being very tired, soon fell into a deep slumber.

I was awakened by sounds below, and, looking out, saw

that day was breaking. Only one man was there, and his voice indicated that he was a negro. Climbing down, I met him as he came out of the stable. I told him who I was, and asked if that was not the widow's plantation. He said it was. I then inquired if there was such a man there as Jenkins. He answered "Yes," and pointed to a grove on a little hill, at a short distance, as the place where I should find him ; telling me at the same time to hurry, as the overseer would soon be stirring. I hastened to the grove, from whence came a great noise of bellowing and shouting, as of many cattle being herded ; and found a number of negroes -- men, women, and children -- driving a large number of cattle into an enclosure. Accosting an old woman, I asked if Jenkins was there. She pointed to a rather elderly negro, and ran away, as if very much afraid, not of me, but of being seen talking with me. I went to the man, and was about accosting him, when a large dog flew at me, and bit my knee severely. I shook off his grip, and held him ; while I told the astonished and somewhat frightened negro who I was in as few words as possible. His first care, after driving away the dog, was to get me out of sight as soon as possible.

Three cabins were near, and one of them was apparently

a tool-shop and general storehouse. The negro took me to the nearest one, where a family lived, but in a few moments escorted me to the tool-shop. Several men slept in it of nights; and a fire was smouldering on the hearth, which I was cautioned not to increase. Stopping a few minutes, and plying me with questions, the negro left, for fear the overseer might notice his absence.

After a while, a tidy old negress, accompanied by a good-looking girl of sixteen or eighteen, came in, bringing a pitcher of excellent milk, some very good hot biscuit, and a large piece of fresh butter. The old woman was very nervous, and wanted to go away immediately; but the young one lingered, asking an occasional question in a timid way, until the older one insisted vehemently on her going. I enjoyed the breakfast greatly, and, after concealing the dishes, lay down on a blanket for a nap.

Several negroes then came in, making a great show of secrecy, and telling me not to be "afeard," as they would not betray me on any account. They all asked many intelligent questions, which I answered to the best of my ability; but they did not stop long, lest the overseer should miss them. They said he had told them of a man, who he suspected was not all right, coming to his house the night before, and

inquiring the way to News Depot; but, if the man would let him (the overseer) alone, he would let the man alone. I asked how they liked their mistress and the overseer; and they spoke very well of both. The overseer, they said, was an easy-going man, and they could fool him readily, but had just as lief work as not. In spite of this, however, they were the most eager for freedom of any slaves I had seen; but I soon discovered they were all religious, though they made no parade of it. The young girl who had brought my breakfast soon returned with another girl; but, after a few confidential giggles, they retired, and no one came again until afternoon. Then the old woman, accompanied by the girl, brought me a delicious apple-pudding and some hot corn-bread. I made a good dinner, and had a quantity left, which I dried on the hearth to carry away with me.

After dark a negro came in, and asked me out to one of the cabins. It was a neat, large shanty, with a very pleasant room; and its mistress, an old negress, looked and spoke very much like an old Quaker lady. Her son, a great jovial fellow of about twenty, had a spelling-book, and seemed from his actions to wish me to know the extent of his learning. I took the book, which opened of itself to the lesson commencing with "Baker," and found he knew the whole

page when I asked him the words in regular succession ; but he failed a few times when I skipped about. He was as black as a coal ; but there was something really good and noble about him. In speaking of the Rebels, I made use of a somewhat strong expression ; and, in the gentlest manner, he asked if the “ good Book ” taught us to speak so of our enemies. I took the rebuke in good part, and, with a feeling of mixed shame and amusement, acknowledged that he was right. After that, I was very careful to keep on my best company manners. A looking-glass was in the room ; and, for the first time in about two months, I saw the reflection of myself. I was not a little amused at the appearance of the individual who confronted me.

I sat by their fire about an hour, conversing on various topics ; and then “ Jordan ” came in, and invited me to go to another house. I bade them all good-by except the young man, whose name was Sam. He went with us. We stopped at the shop to get my pieces of bread, and then, by a roundabout route to avoid the overseer, went to the cabin, or house ; for it deserved the latter name. It was a story and a half high, had glass windows, and was furnished generally in good style. Entering it, I saw several men ; and the sight of one of them made me for the moment think I was

betrayed. I turned to fight my way out : but the kindly, amused looks of the negroes re-assured me ; and, as I hesitated, the man in question — who was as white as I am, and dressed in a Confederate uniform — took off his hat, and bade me good-evening in a manner which at once satisfied me that he was a slave. A poor white he certainly was not ; he was too well-bred and good-looking for one of that class : and I concluded, and afterwards learned it was true, that he was the son of the deceased planter by a quadroon house-servant.

The negroes had prepared me an excellent supper. The bill of fare, as near as I can recollect, was as follows, — large piece of boiled beef, flanked by common and sweet potatoes ; large piece of pork, flanked by cabbage ; fresh biscuit and butter ; pitcher of milk, and some wheat-coffee ; pitcher of syrup, and some genuine Yankee gingerbread ; also an apple-pie.

I ate heartily, the negroes looking on, and enjoying my evident satisfaction ; and, after supper, the real business for which I was there was attended to. Three or four men conducted me into an up-stairs room, whose appearance surprised me. A mahogany desk such as teachers use in our schools, covered with books and writing materials, several good

chairs, and a neat bedstead, were only a part of its furniture. A quantity of good clothing was hanging about, and among it I noticed a military coat. The white negro, seeing my curious glances, took it down, and handed it to me. It was of very fine blue cloth, its breast and skirts covered with gold braid and lace, and altogether was as rich a garment as I had ever seen. It had been the pride of the planter in his younger days, when he was a captain in the United-States navy, and by him had been given to his slave son who stood before me.

I sat down to the desk, and after a few moments' conversation, they supplying pencil and paper, commenced taking down what information they could give me. They told me much that had been told me by John Randolph, and added a few particulars, which I wrote down, while they looked over my shoulder, uttering exclamations of admiration and pleasure at what they thought the ease, rapidity, and finish of my writing. They desired me to write some words in a blank-book which they had. I did so, and then, in as good a hand as I could, wrote my name and address, and requested them to write to my relatives if they ever had the opportunity, or to show the paper to such United-States soldiers or officers as might come that way. This they prom-

ised to do very cheerfully. The following is a verbatim copy of the memorandum I made on the occasion : —

1. Widow ——— plantation.
2. Two 2 miles to island, bear to^r right, 20 feet, 100 yds.
to ferry.
3. Three 2 miles to island, bear to left-hand bank.
4. $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to Myrie Creek.
5. Three miles to South Boston.
6. 6 Six miles to Slabtown, Banister River.
7. 3 or 4 miles to Hicoe Falls.
8. 15 miles to Clarksville.

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35 about.

No. 2 means that at this place is a bad fall, the most dangerous part of which I should avoid by going to the right of an island by a channel twenty feet wide ; after which it would be about one hundred yards to News Depot, or ferry, where were Rebel soldiers. No. 3 indicates another bad fall to be avoided by going to the left of an island. No. 4, a bridge over Myrie Creek, carrying the Richmond and Danville Railroad, and crossing very near the River Dan : a guard was stationed at this bridge, which I was to look out for. No. 5, a town on either side of the River Dan, and a high bridge crossing the river : a Rebel guard was also sta-

tioned here to watch the river for just such fellows as myself, and for suspicious-looking negroes. No. 6, saw-mills on the river: the Banister empties into the Dan at this place. No. 7, very bad falls. The negroes thought I had better not try to pass them in my canoe; but, if I could get by, it would be plain sailing beyond all the way to Clarksville. With the river below that point they were not familiar.

At Clarksville the Staunton River joins the Dan, and the two form the Roanoke. There I should see the piers of a railroad bridge which had been destroyed. The only other bridge I should find was at Gaston, a few miles below Weldon. The negroes had seen my boat at the landing, and asked me where I got that "wonderful big canoe," and if it was possible I had brought it down river alone. On my assuring them I had, one exclaimed in unfeigned admiration, "Well, you is a man sure enuff!"

I now intimated that it was time I was starting on my journey. They agreed with me, and we all went down stairs. They had provided me a large cotton bag filled with food, and an old blanket, which I afterwards found of great service. One had also made me a light paddle. Their cheerful words and thoughtful kindness so much encour-

aged me, that home seemed, for the moment, almost in sight.

After a little more conversation, I bade them good-by; and they all wished me a hearty God speed. The young man Sam, and another young fellow as like him as possible, volunteered to accompany me to the boat. They took a roundabout way, carefully avoiding paths; and were so happy, they could not walk soberly along, but jumped and capered about like two crazy colts, pulling up occasionally to say a low word to me, and then indulging in their wild antics again. I trudged along soberly, although I felt good all over, and would have liked a romp with them; but it was best, I thought, to stand a little on my dignity. Our circuitous route lengthened the half-mile to a mile, and a pretty rough mile at that; and my clothes became so full of burrs, that I looked like a fine-quilled porcupine. The boys sobered down after a while, and we conversed in low guarded tones. We spoke mostly of religious subjects, and they seemed to have broad and liberal ideas. One of them thought it not well to pay clergymen regular salaries. If the minister could not sufficiently impress his congregation to make them open their hearts and purses on the spot, he should take to some other business. He made this appear

very reasonable ; but the world, just now, is not of his way of thinking.

At last we arrived at the river. The full moon was just rising over the tall trees on the opposite bank, and casting a broad veil of silver over the rapid foam-streaked water. I looked down the dim curves of the river, and wondered whether its swift current was to carry me to death and an unknown grave, or to the friends who were longing and praying for me at home. I hoped for the best, and, suppressing all feelings of doubt and gloom, stepped into the canoe. As I did so, the noble boys said, “ We’s gwine to pray for you, massa.”

My heart choking so I could scarcely speak, I pushed off into the broad track of moon-silvered water ; but something within nerved my arms, and I felt strong enough to overcome all obstacles. As I receded rapidly from the shore, I turned and looked back. The boys were still on their knees, praying. Taking a long look at them, I set to work managing the canoe ; for the river was rocky, and all my little skill was required to keep the canoe from being overturned.

The boat glided swiftly along ; and I soon came within hearing of the falls, and, at the same time, heard a train of cars in the distance. The train came nearer and nearer,

and presently stopped, and then went on again. I concluded the place where it stopped was News Depot, and began to look narrowly for the channel which should lead me past the falls. The river ran rapidly; and all I had to do was to guide the boat, and keep near the right bank, so as not to be carried past the channel. I soon detected an opening ahead, and a few vigorous strokes ran the canoe into it; but in a moment it was thrown high and dry on the island by the fierce sweep of the current.

Putting all my things into the bottom of the boat, I set it in motion again. Seeing it would be useless to attempt to guide so heavy a thing in such a current, I gave it a strong push, jumped in, and, crouching low down, resolved to let it go as it pleased. It went banging along against either shore, knocking against stumps, and plunging through masses of trailing willows, which dragged their slimy branches over me to my infinite disgust, but at last, after a very rough passage, came out into the broad river again. Then the thunder of the falls told me what I would have encountered had I gone the other way.

I thanked my stars for having so well overcome that difficulty; but News Depot was in sight, and I had to run the gantlet of the Rebel guards. I had all along been

thinking how I should get by such places, and had formed a good many plans. One of them was to sink the canoe, so it would look like a floating log, and, landing with my traps, to set it adrift, go down the opposite bank, and take my chance of getting it again below the depot. If the canoe had been lighter, I should have done this; but considering that both ends were stove in, and that, even if whole, it was too heavy for one person to manage, I concluded to risk passing the depot in it. Its color was light, almost white, as water-washed logs are apt to be; but I remedied this by splashing water all over its sides till it was quite as dark as the river.

The moon cast a narrow shadow along the right bank; and, guiding the canoe into it, I lay down in the bottom, with my right arm hanging over the side, and trailing the paddle in the water. The depot was on the opposite shore, but now quite near; and the noise of the fall was rapidly growing fainter. Arriving opposite the station, I saw two or three men standing beside a smouldering fire, and heard them speaking in low tones, but could not distinguish what they said. They were undoubtedly sentinels; and the least noise—the grating of the canoe against a bush or a stump, or the slight scraping of the paddle against its sides—would

have attracted their attention. At last, however, I got safely by; and a great load of anxiety lifted from my shoulders at the thought of these two serious obstacles so easily surmounted.

According to the negroes, the next fall was two miles below, and I was to avoid it by hugging the left bank: so, after a while, I crossed the river, and made ready for another trial of my energies. As the boat wound along around the curves of the river, the fall I had passed would at times be wholly inaudible, and again would roar out as if it were after me, determined not to be cheated of a victim.

After a while I heard the falls ahead, and soon afterwards came to the passage. A mill had at some previous time been there, and parts of its walls and timbers were still standing. I got by this place easier than I expected, though the passage was difficult enough. As I went on, I was somewhat puzzled; for, though I watched closely for the main river, I did not see it again: but, half a mile below, the part I was in widened to the width of the main current. No doubt the part of the stream which went over the rough fall had divided into numerous small channels below, and returned to the main river.

The next obstacle I was to surmount was Myrie Creek.

I was close upon it before I saw it; but, luckily, I was making no noise, and, the bridge being a rod or more from the river, I was not very likely to be seen. I heard voices as I drifted by; but they were apparently only ordinary remarks. A fire was at one end of the bridge, and the soldiers were probably there. I could not see them nor their fire, only its light reflected on the hill and bushes. I was very much elated at so successfully passing all these dangerous places and began to see my way through quite clearly.

The next place to look out for was South Boston, where a covered bridge crossed the river. I remembered seeing it from my loop-hole in the car. The depot was on the left bank, but the most of the town was on the right. It was three miles from Myrie Creek: so I took things easily, and got along very comfortably. As I passed plantation after plantation, the bloodhounds would bay out with their deep mournful voices; and they kept up the doleful music until I was some distance away. They were half a mile or more inland; but, though I made little noise, their keen scent or hearing warned them of my presence.

Presently I came in sight of the bridge at Myrie Creek. It was a covered one, about thirty feet above the water, and,

from a distance, appeared to spring across the river in a single span : but, as I came nearer, I discovered it was supported by five or six stone piers. I adopted the same policy as at News Depot, and passed safely, although men were on the bank.

The next point to be passed was Slabtown, which, according to the negroes, was six or seven miles below. I was very much fatigued, the excitement having worn on me much more than the work ; and, sitting down in the bottom of the canoe, I let it drift by itself, the negroes having told me that between South Boston and Hicoe Falls was a long stretch of quiet water. At last I fell asleep, and, when I awoke, found the canoe drifting along stern foremost. Rousing up, I paddled some ways, but, still feeling very tired, soon laid down the oars : and from that time until morning was a confused period of drowsiness, dreary glimpses of slowly gliding woods, and dark quiet water ; and then complete forgetfulness, varied by queer dreams.

At last the cocks began to crow on the distant plantations, and not long afterwards came the first faint flush of daylight. I was in hopes I had passed Slabtown, as I wished to run the Hicoe Falls by daylight ; and, keeping all my senses on the alert, kept on. The scenery was bold and beautiful,

and the sun rose smiling on the world. I breakfasted off the contents of my bag, which I now examined for the first time. I found in it, in addition to my former stock, three or four good biscuits, a nice piece of beef, and some gingerbread. I made a good meal, and felt invigorated, particularly after washing my face and combing my hair. I heard noisy water below, and, not knowing how rough it might be, pulled the canoe ashore, and walked down the bank about half a mile to reconnoitre. In one place, the river fell two feet perpendicularly; but, marking the safest channel with my eye, I went back, and re-embarked. I went through all right, with the exception of taking in some water; and, feeling sure this was not Hicoc Falls, still kept on the alert, and going about a mile farther, and hugging the right bank, saw signs of a ferry.

A road came down to the river on the opposite shore, and on this I could see the outer ends of several canoes and flat-boats. I dropped down very quietly, so as to see before being seen. An old darky was standing by the canoes; and near him was a younger one, and close to him a saw-mill. I watched the negroes, and, when I saw they had seen me, made gestures to them to be quiet, and at the same time asked by gestures who was in the mill, where I heard saw-

ing and hammering. They appeared very much frightened, and made frantic signs to me to keep on. I nodded, and did so.

The mill had several windows; and my heart was in my mouth for fear some one should come to them. If they should, they would surely see me. No one came, however; and I passed this danger, too, in safety. The younger negro followed me along the shore; and, when I arrived at a place of safety, I hauled in, and had a talk with him.

The negroes knew very well what I was from my manner. I asked the boy where Slabtown was, hoping he would say two or three miles back; but, with a comical look, he said I had just passed it. The saw-mill was Slabtown. I was surprised, and conceived a small opinion of Southern towns. Some one then appeared on the opposite bank, about half a mile away, wishing to be ferried over. The old man made signs to us, which, the boy said, meant I must drop farther down the river. I did so, keeping in among the overhanging willows, and, stopping again, had another chat with the darky. He advised me to hug the left bank until past the rapids, as white folks were likely to be at the main fall, which I had been directed to take. The nearer a man lived to a place, the more I thought he ought to know about it:

so I concluded to follow this advice. I asked if there was any thing to look out for before reaching the fall; and the darky said another mill was on the same side of the river, and that was all. I asked who was in the mill I had just passed; and he said two white men, and both had guns!

Thinking the neighborhood rather unhealthy, I bade the boy good-by, and pushed off into the river. I crossed, a little lower down, a curve, which concealed me from the mill, and, lower still, saw the other saw-mill. The river then widened to nearly a mile; and I hoped, by keeping closely to the left bank, to pass unseen. I could distinguish two or three men standing by the great wheel of the mill; but they looked small and indistinct: so I paddled along coolly, that they might, in case they had a glass, see nothing suspicious in my movements.

I had gone about half a mile, when I heard peculiar sounds, like the far-off thump of oars, and, turning, saw a large boat emerging from the vicinity of the mill. It was too distant to distinguish who was in it; but I had little doubt the men at the mill had seen and were pursuing me. The river at that point was very shallow; and I could not reach the shore without abandoning the canoe, and wading some distance. This I did not like to do; for it would

render suspicion certainty, and force me to abandon the boat in which I was making such good headway.

I decided to paddle rapidly down stream until I came to a good landing, and then to haul up, and wait for developments. My chance of escape on land would, of course, be much better than on water. I paddled with all my strength, making the water foam at the bow and sides of my clumsy friend ; but, as I was gliding swiftly along, I put a little too much muscle on the paddle, and it broke in two. My heart sunk ; for the other paddle was so clumsy, I could scarcely handle it. I tried it, however, and, putting forth all my strength, managed to keep the canoe along. Not far ahead was a rocky bluff ; and there I determined to land. With great effort I reached the shore, and, hastily fastening the canoe, took my bread, and, climbing the steep banks, secreted myself behind a tree, not so much to be out of sight, as to avoid any shot which might be sent after me.

The boat drew rapidly nearer, and I eagerly scanned its crew and lading. A large pile of tobacco-boxes was along nearly its whole length. Two negroes were pushing it with poles ; one rowing with great sweeps, and another steering with a long rudder. Seeing no white men on board, I hailed the negroes, and asked if any one had noticed me back at

the mill, and if they were going to bother me. They answered no ; but that I had better keep still, as soldiers were coming down on the next boat. This was startling information ; and I asked what the soldiers were in pursuit of. They answered, nothing ; only guarding the boat, which had powder aboard. I now took their advice, and kept still ; for the boat had been going all the time, and the negroes were out of hearing.

Before long, I heard the next boat approaching rapidly. As it passed, I saw half a dozen soldiers lounging about, and the same number of negroes propelling the boat. They did not notice my canoe, and kept on about their business. When they were far enough away, I re-embarked, being determined to reach Hicoe Fall by daylight. It was, I thought, so near, it would be foolish to wait until night, and then go the short intervening distance, and wait again for daylight. I crossed over to the left bank, which I had all along avoided (the Richmond and Danville Railroad being on that side, and running close to the river for a long distance) ; because, if I had to leave my canoe, I purposed taking to the comparatively untravelled North-Carolina side. I knew, however, I must be below where the railroad left the river, and also remembered that the negro I had last seen

told me I could better cross on the left side : so I crossed over. I had a great dread of the fall, and wanted to get the fullest information about it. Coming to some large canoes and flat-boats fastened to the shore, and seeing a path leading up over the bank, I landed to reconnoitre. Leaving my boat among the others, I went up the bank. It was thickly overgrown with high weeds ; and at its summit an immense cornfield spread out before me, in which twenty negroes, men and women, were at work gathering the ears. I made signs to them from the edge of the weeds ; and they saw me, but acted queerly. One young fellow started to come to me, and then went back again. Thinking they would come presently, I went down the bank to see if the boat was all right, and then returned, making some little noise.

The negroes were still at work in the field ; and, knowing there was some good reason why they had not answered my summons, I was on my guard, and, looking about the country as if very much interested in the landscape, suddenly caught sight of the most villanous-looking face I ever laid eyes on. It was a short, strong-looking man, with an immense grisly beard and wolfish gray eyes. I saw this in an instant, as I did not let my eyes rest on him, but pretended not to

see him. He stood just in the edge of the weeds, and was watching me like a cat. Looking coolly about for a moment or two longer, and taking no more notice of the negroes or of the man than if they had been so many bushes, I started back to the canoe as if I had plenty of time, and nothing on my mind. I half expected every moment to feel a bullet in uncomfortable proximity with my ribs; but, stepping into the canoe, I paddled off with an absent air. My aim was to disarm suspicion, and I must have succeeded.

The man was, no doubt, the overseer of the negroes, and, as he sat close to the bushes, probably did not see me until I came up the bank the second time. I did nothing at that time to betray my true character; and he probably took it for granted that I was all right. I was little more than a rod from him; but I governed my features so well, that he did not read them. The fact of the soldiers having just gone by in the boat probably aided me, as he would naturally suppose they had seen me. I felt very anxious, however, and momentarily expected to see that ugly face, backed by a rifle, peering through the bushes on the bank; but I trusted to luck, and it did not fail me.

I soon heard the roar of the falls, and prepared for a new and severe ordeal. Far down the river I saw a point of

land, and concluded it was the head of the island, to the left of which I must go to avoid the most dangerous rapids. On drawing nearer, it proved to be what I thought, and soon afterwards I came to the passage ; but the point of the island still hid the other and main portion of the river.

The sight was not assuring. Far down as I could see, the river was boiling and leaping over the ragged rocks, which showed their black backs in a whirlpool of tormented water. It was too late to retreat; and, bracing myself for the encounter, I went on. I tried to guide the boat, but might as well have tried to guide a balloon. It went leaping and plunging along for a few minutes, and then was high on a rock, half full of water ; my bread and blanket swimming about its bottom like corked bottles in an ocean.

I put my "traps" in the bow, which was comparatively dry, and then tried with the setting-pole to push the canoe off into the stream. It would not move an inch. I must have been a comical spectacle ; but I was really in a dangerous predicament. I could not get ashore by wading or swimming : if I had attempted it, I should have been bruised to death in a moment on the ragged rocks. I could not remain where I was, and the only thing I could do I did. Stripping off all my clothing, and keeping a firm hold of the

side of the canoe, I slid into the water. It was very cold, and chilled me through and through ; but I braced myself against the rock, and, lifting and heaving with all my strength, soon started the canoe a little. It was hung on a breaker three or four feet long, and just about in the centre, so that the water, rushing against either end, held it firmly braced in its position. I had to destroy its balance ; and then the preponderance of water on one end would carry it off into the current. I heaved again and again, and at last the boat began to swing slowly round. I sprang in ; and in another moment we were dashing and tumbling about again in the mad stream, and then—whack ! —were high and dry on another rock. Again I got the boat clear, and again it was fast. I was fearful that, notwithstanding its very thick bottom and sides, it would be smashed to atoms : but it was the only way ; and, after a moment's delay, I heaved it off again, first scooping out the surplus water.

After a half a mile or more of this kind of navigation, I came at last into smooth water, and sat down completely exhausted, but very thankful. Resting a while, I wrung the water from my clothes, which were drifting about in the bottom of the canoe, and spread them out to dry. In a little while I put them on, though they were still uncomfortably

wet. I thought then I was entitled to something to eat, and, opening my bag of provisions, made a hearty meal, feeling very happy that I had surmounted all the difficulties which had looked so formidable at the outset.

As I had got along so well thus far in the daylight, I determined to keep on so as to pass Clarksville in the night-time. It was a beautiful day; and, in spite of my fatigue, I enjoyed the journey. All along the river I had seen numerous flocks of wild-duck: but to-day they filled the air, and were continually flying out from the little sheltered coves in front of me; some of them not taking the trouble to fly, but swimming off into mid-river. Large flocks of geese also passed up the river. They flew very low; and some of them, not observing me, came so near that I could see their eyes. When they observed me, they would sweep off with a loud whirr, but soon afterwards would return to the course of the river. If I had had a gun, I could have filled the boat.

The scenery was wild and beautiful; and, as I saw but few signs of inhabitants, my mind was at ease, and I enjoyed it. I met two boats coming up. I put the width of the river between us; but they were having hard work to make head-way against the stream, and were content to mind their own

business. They made very slow progress against the rapid current. Placing a long pole firmly on the river bottom, the men walked from bow to stern; the pole resting on their shoulders, and held firmly in their hands. Then they dragged the pole back to the bow, and repeated the process. As I floated easily along past them, I thanked my stars that I was not obliged to return up river.

I had made rapid progress, and towards evening, seeing some houses on the right bank, concluded to pull up, and reconnoitre. It was about sunset. Ascending the right bank, I heard a boy calling cattle not far off. I could not see him; and an open plain was between us, which it was not prudent to cross until after dark. A building was in sight; but there were no signs of life about it. At last, it being sufficiently dark, I started out. The building proved to be a tobacco-barn, although it could not have been made for that purpose. It was empty, and therefore of no account to me.

Scouting about, I soon came upon a cart-road, and, following it for half a mile, stumbled upon a grove of straw-stacks. I decided to go no farther, and, gathering a large armful of the straw, went back to my canoe. Putting the straw in the bows, I tried to get a nap, but, though very tired, could

not get the town of Clarksville out of my head ; and at last decided to let the canoe drift down, and await developments. I dozed a little, and probably had gone a mile or more, when I heard voices on the left bank of the river. A cold gray fog was on the water, and nothing could be distinguished at a boat's-length. I pulled in towards the shore, and, dragging my canoe up on the land so it would stay fast, quietly climbed the bank.

Near by were stables, cow-barns, and cabins ; and the voices were evidently those of negroes at work in and near the stables. I walked about among the buildings ; but, as it was dark, the negroes did not distinguish me from themselves. Feeling satisfied that all was safe, I returned to the boat, and, fastening it firmly, went back to the buildings. I button-holed one of them, and, though he was somewhat astonished and frightened, made him understand who and what I was. I told him I was suffering from cold and fatigue, and wanted to get by a fire. He led me into a squalid cabin, where half a dozen negroes were crouching over the hearth. They were very poorly clad and degraded-looking ; by far the worst I had seen in the South. They told me their master's name was Skipper, and that he was a very hard man. The place was an island, formed by a

cut-off from the Dan into the Staunton River, which I had passed in the darkness.

The negroes were not allowed to leave the island ; and one young fellow lay on the floor, sick from a severe whipping which he had received for going to Clarksville the previous Sunday. He showed me his back, still raw from the cuts of the lash. I was too weary to notice much, and what I remember of that night seems now some terrible nightmare. But one pleasant thing I do remember ; and that is the patient, quick obedience of a young girl named Marie to her mother's and brother's imperative commands. Marie was the best looking of them all, and she seemed some black spirit. She had very large, wistful brown eyes, and kept them fixed steadily on me, except when I looked at her, and then she timidly looked away. The old woman gave me some sour milk and a piece of corn-bread ; and eating it, and the old negro woman bringing me some old coats for pillow and covering, I threw myself down by the young fellow who had been whipped, and tried to sleep.

But my sleep was broken and troubled. I dreamed frightful dreams, and can now scarcely separate the real from the unreal. Whenever I awoke, the large black eyes of Marie were fixed on me ; the girl herself seeming to have

no idea of sleep. Near morning, one of the men roused me, and said, "You muss be gwine, massa." They told me there were bad falls at Clarksville, about two miles below, which it would be difficult to pass. I should have gone into the cut-off, and through it to the Staunton River, which joined the Dan at Clarksville. I inquired if it would be possible to make my way back to the cut-off, and they said it would be hard to do it alone; but, if I had a light cance, it might be done. I decided to make the trial, and, bidding them good-by, started. By their reckoning, the cut-off was not more than half a mile away. I made scarcely any head-way, though I exerted all my strength. The current ran very rapidly; and I had to keep stopping and resting, holding on to the bank as I did so, to prevent the boat being swept down the stream. At last, after going some distance, I landed, and walked up the bank to see how things looked. Not far up the river I saw the cut-off, and, taking note of the proper way of entering it, returned to the canoe. The fog was still very thick; but the increasing light showed it would shortly be day. I soon gained the wished-for channel, and glided easily and rapidly down its current.

The mist was too thick to allow me to distinguish when I entered Staunton River; but the appearance of the fog

soon told that the sun was rising: and not long afterward the mist and vapor grew thinner, and then swept entirely away, showing the sun about an hour high. The morning was a beautiful one, and I felt its invigorating influence, lifting fear and anxiety from my mind, as the sun was lifting the fog from the river. I hugged the left bank to keep within the shadow of the willows, because the bright sun, shining directly up the river, almost blinded me; and I saw but one person, — a negro, — pushing a canoe up river on the opposite side. He waved his hat, and halloed; but I did not see fit to notice him. At that distance, he probably took me for one of his own color, I being in the shadow of the trees.

Soon after this I heard the roar of the fall on the other side of the island, and knew I was near to Clarksville. I passed a magnificent place on the left bank, — a large, handsome mansion, painted white, and surrounded by neat outbuildings, with a beautiful lawn of several acres sloping gently down to the river. The scene reminded me of pictures I had seen of the manor-houses of England. Turning soon a slight curve in the river, I saw, a long distance down, the high stone pillars of what had once been a bridge; and this, I had been told, was at Clarksville. Keeping on, I soon observed,

some distance this side of the piers, a little house on the left bank, and, near by, indications of a ferry. I crossed over, and, approaching the house, caught sight of a negro man, woman, and child in the doorway. I beckoned to the man, and he came down to the landing. I explained to him in a very few words who I was, and what I wanted; and he told me to drop silently down the river, hide my canoe, and then cautiously make my way back to the house. I did as directed, leaving my things in the boat; and that was the last I ever saw of the wooden friend who had served me so faithfully.

CHAPTER IV.

OVERLAND TRAVEL.

THE woman cooked me a breakfast of fried eggs, sweet-potatoes, pumpkin-mush, and hot cakes ; and I commenced a good meal : but she soon grew nervous, and took me and the breakfast into a back room. She went out, and I was eating and enjoying myself there mightily ; when she came in again, and, snatching away my food, said with a look of indignation, “ What you got in dar, — in de boat down in de riber ? ”

I knew she referred to my bag of bread ; and I felt rather mean, but soon explained that I was laying up something for a rainy day. This somewhat mollified her ; and she gave me the breakfast again, and soon afterwards seemed to be restored to good humor.

While I was eating in the front room, the man had, in talking, put a new idea into my head. He said I could not possibly navigate the river, as there were many bad falls below Clarksville which could not be passed in the canoe.

He also told me, — what I considered of more importance, — that, about a mile down the river, a road led directly from Clarksville to Petersburg. It was an old plank-road ; and I could not lose my way upon it, and would have to pass but two towns, — Boydtown and Dinwiddie.

I was elated by this information, and decided to change my route, — not to go down to Gaston, but up by the plank-road to near Petersburg, and then to strike off to the right towards our army, governing my particular movements by circumstances. The man advised me to leave the canoe with him ; and I decided to do so, first, however, questioning him closely to learn how much his advice was influenced by a desire for the boat. I concluded that he was honest, and decided to trust him. He said I had better hide in a thicket near by until nightfall, when he would direct me to the road.

I remained all day in a dense woods, sleeping a part of the time. The day seemed very long ; and, even when sunset came, I thought it would never grow dark. As soon as it was safe to emerge from my hiding-place, I went to where the negro was chopping wood, and asked if I could go into the house ; and he said, “Not yet, but pretty soon.” Returning to the woods, I waited patiently ; and after a while,

the negro calling me, I entered the house, and the woman gave me supper. I did not feel at all diffident about taking it, as my canoe was worth many times as much. The man said, if any one asked him how he came by it, he should say he had found it floating down the river.

He knew John Randolph, and promised to tell him I had come thus far in safety, and was still in good spirits. Then, making my blanket and bag into a convenient roll, I set out along the river-bank to find the road, which the negro said was about a mile lower down. Going on at a brisk pace, I soon saw a bright light ahead, on a road sloping up from the river. A negro man was sitting by the fire. I did not like to go within the circle of light; so I whistled, and he started up, and came slowly and doubtfully towards me. I soon re-assured him, and then asked some questions about the road. His answers tallied with the other man's, and satisfied me I was on the right route. He also knew John Randolph; and I asked him to tell him about my having got along so well. I thought, if Randolph knew it, it would encourage him to do for others what he had done for me. The man, when I first saw him, was reading a newspaper, which he obligingly gave me, saying, that, if he was at home, he could give me others. Soon afterwards I started

on my way, the negro accompanying me a half-mile or so, and cheering me with every encouraging word he could think of. He was a tall, smart-looking fellow, and one of the very few slaves I had seen who could read. He said there were mile-posts all along the road to Petersburg, eighty-three miles. The town of Boydtown was twelve miles distant. Shaking me cordially by the hand, he at last bade me good-by, and I pushed forward.

A good many of the mile-posts were gone ; but those that were left gave me great encouragement, for they enabled me to measure my progress. I passed through Boydtown about eleven o'clock. The lights were not out, and I could see it had a fine college ; at least one, which looked fine by moonlight. The grounds seemed well laid out, and the appearance of the whole was quite Northern. The dogs barked fiercely as I passed through the wide street ; but none actually molested me.

I had gone only about fifteen miles, when I became so tired that I could go no farther. I had been driving myself for some time ; but then my will gave out, and I laid down right in the road, and slept soundly. After a while, I awoke, and, starting again, walked about seven miles, though my feet dragged heavily for the last two or three. Then

I laid down again, and had another short nap; and then got up again, and went on about six miles more. Day was now breaking; and finding a fallen oak, which, having its leaves on, offered a good hiding-place, I stretched myself under it, and when the sun was well risen, and it had grown somewhat warm, had a refreshing sleep. Some time in the afternoon I awoke, and after a frugal meal from a slice of bread, and a shred of meat, went off on a scouting tour, keeping in the direction of Petersburg, but not going too near the road. I found some persimmons, which tasted very nicely; but my stomach sympathized with the fatigue of my legs, and they made me sick for an hour or more.

I kept on slowly through the woods, and towards night tried to find some negro of whom I could obtain information, but, finding none, at last stretched myself under a fence close to the road. Presently a white and a black boy came along, driving a herd of swine. The presence of the white boy obliged me to keep still; but soon one of the herd came tearing back, with the negro boy running and shouting after it. I showed myself to the boy, and beckoned to him. He was too much engaged with the obstinate hog to notice me; and I felt decidedly cut when he ran off again without even a word.

I then set out along the road, although it was not quite dark, and had gone only a short distance, when I met a negro. I asked him a few questions, but did not tell him I was a Yankee ; and yet, after talking a few minutes, he asked me if I was not. I was somewhat taken aback by the question, but acknowledged the fact. He detected me by my voice. He said he had just passed a negro going in my direction, and, if I hurried, I should catch up with him before he reached the river. I asked what river ; and he said the Meheria, and that farther up, near Dinwiddie, I should cross the Nottaway. I inquired if there were any guards at these rivers ; and he said he didn't know about the Nottaway, but there were none at the Meheria. Leaving the negro, I started on a run after the other man, but soon concluded he had too much the start of me, and slackened my pace to a walk.

Presently I came to a place where a couple of trees had been felled across the highway, and the travel turned off to the right. I did not like to leave the path, as I had grown weary of travelling on branch and doubtful roads : so I kept right on over the trees, thinking that some small bridge might be gone, and I should soon come upon the travelled route again. The negroes had positively assured me there was a plank-road all the way to Petersburg, and only one : so I

felt sure of coming out right if I followed the planks. I kept on quite a distance, and at last came to the end of the road; at least to an end, if not *the* end; for an immense ravine nearly or quite a hundred feet deep, and three or four hundred feet wide, was before me, half hidden by the darkness. A stream of water ran through it, and I could distinguish some signs of a bridge nearly gone to decay.

I disliked to go all the way back to where the road forked, and decided to creep along the river's bank until I came to the new bridge, whose outlines I thought I could then discern far down the river. I walked on through the high grass and weeds thickly covered with dew, keeping near the edge of the bluff, which presently sloped down to only a slight bank. Soon I came to a road, which I judged was the one I had left behind at the fork. I followed the road down to the stream; and, lo! there was no bridge. The one I had seen was an illusion. No alternative presenting itself, I laid aside my clothes, and waded into the ice-cold water. When I reached the other bank, I was chilled and very uncomfortable; and, while putting on my clothes, the cold night-air struck right through me.

I found a perfect snarl of roads on the farther side of the river, and, taking one which looked like the one I had left,

walked forward. As I went on, the road grew less and less like the other ; but I determined not to turn back until sure I was wrong : so I kept on about three miles, when I came to a house and outbuildings. I scouted round among the latter to find a negro cabin, but, finding none that was not deserted, cautiously reconnoitred the house. It was not a pretentious building ; and some beams were placed against its shutters and doors, apparently as fastenings.

I went round to its farther side, and, after a few minutes' hesitation, knocked on the door. No answer. I repeated the summons ; and soon a woman's voice called out, " Who is thar ? " Giving my speech the Southern drawl, I told her a soldier, on the way from Clarksville to Petersburg, who had lost himself back on the Meheria River.

She said she was sorry, and told me that her husband was a soldier too, up at Petersburg. She also said that the road I was on led to Lawrenceville ; and where the plank-road was she did not know, but thought I had better go back to the river, and try to find it. " These are hard times," she added, " for poor folks."

I assented feelingly to this remark, and thanking her, and saying good-night, started back to the river. After a while, I got there, and, beating about for a time in the dark-

ness, found the plank-road again. I was rejoiced to find it, and, although very tired, thought I would make some headway. I was too tired, however, to go far, and only went fifteen miles that night. Towards morning, I passed several wagon-camps. I came upon them very quietly, and, walking on with a nonchalant air, got by them all about as soon as seen ; no one taking the trouble to follow. If the soldiers had seen me before I passed, no doubt they would have intercepted me, and, in that event, might have discovered that I was a Yankee.

Not finding a good hiding-place, I did not put up until sunrise. Then I discovered a secluded spot near the road, and, after a bite of bread, rolled myself in my ragged blanket, and slept soundly. I awoke somewhat refreshed, though stiff and cold. My legs had not recovered from their ill treatment at Hicoe Falls ; and my knee, where the dog bit it, pained me considerably. Liberty, however, was before me ; and no difficulty seemed too great to be surmounted.

The day was immeasurably long ; and, growing impatient, I set out about half an hour before sunset. I passed two houses by going off the road into some woods, and soon after came upon two negro women gathering pine-knots for light-wood from the old planks of the road. They were some

little distance apart; and I accosted the nearer one, and, after taking her measure, trusted her. She could give me little information, but told me not to trust the other; for she was "green." When we joined the other, we talked as if I was a Confederate soldier; and she said, "It am a pity dat sech a nice-looking man as you am a sodger." I asked if a poor soldier without money could get any thing to eat about there; and they said I might at the second house, but not at the first, for the woman there was terribly stingy. The first girl told me, that, in my costume, I had little to fear; and yet she would not advise me to travel by daylight.

I left them, and, coming to the second house, marched into the yard, and up to the door, and rapped. A little negro boy appeared; and I asked him if his mistress was about. He said yes, and went to call her. She soon appeared, — an old lady, rather pinched in the face, — and I inquired if she could let me have something to eat. She said she would like to, but had no bread or meat cooked. I then asked for some milk; and she said the morning milk was all gone, and they had not yet milked for the evening. Being determined to have something, I then requested her to give me a glass of water; and she directed the little negro boy to bring it. I thanked her very courteously, and she looked a little ashamed.

Soon afterward I met three ladies and a young girl on the road, and saluted them in a style as nearly Southern as I could. The expression of surprise on their faces, however, told me it was not exactly the thing. I had done my best, however ; and, as nothing happened, it was all well.

I soon came to a house on the left of the highway. There were trees between it and me ; and, as it stood back from the road some little distance, I had approached very near to it before I saw that it was a place of considerable resort. A number of horses were hitched to posts near the door, and a number of men were lounging about on the veranda. I passed by as unconcernedly as I could, although I expected to be hailed every minute. I made up my mind to run if I was, and take to the nearest woods. No one troubled me, however ; and I went on much relieved, but anxious to put as much distance as possible between me and the mansion.

Presently I came to a place in the road where I could see ahead some distance. A large tract of cleared land was on either side of the road, and several groups of houses. I thought I could distinguish white men at work about the nearest house, and concluded that I had been careless long enough, and must look for some place of concealment. I

was about starting back to find some cover, when I heard voices in the direction from which I had come. No good cover was near ; but I took to the best, — a narrow strip of trees and bushes which grew between the road I was on, and one which forked from it just beyond me. I had scarcely got into the bushes, when a herd of cattle came in sight. They came opposite to me, and, I suppose, scented my presence ; for they stopped, and stared at me in a dreadfully aggravating way. I was afraid the men would notice their queer actions, or that persons in the vicinity would come up and discover me : so I pelted them away with sticks, — all but one stupid steer, which showed fight. At last I planted a large stone between his eyes ; and he ran off bellowing, but stopping occasionally to look back, and threaten me with his horns.

I now watched the turn in the road, and presently saw coming along very slowly an old woman, a girl of about twenty, a very pretty younger girl, and a small boy. They had baskets, and, I judged, had been to let the cattle out of pasture, and to gather pine-knots, which are used by the poor whites and negroes for candles. They sauntered along slowly, and, when opposite to me, stopped for several minutes not ten feet away, and in plain view of my hiding-place.

They went on a little distance, and then returned ; and soon a large portly man came along, who called the pretty girl Lucy. I hugged the ground very tightly ; for, though I could have overcome the whole party, the pursuit which would have followed might have proved serious. After chatting about five minutes, they separated, and went their ways.

As soon as they were fairly out of sight, I went back to better cover, and waited until dark ; then started again, but had not gone far, when I heard the sound of approaching wheels and the tread of horsemen. Hiding behind a pine-bush, I waited for them to pass. There was a buggy and several mounted men riding before, and as many mounted men riding behind, apparently as guard. I could not see the occupants of the buggy ; but I heard a scrap of their conversation. It referred to some official order, but I could not hear just what. After they had gone, I started on again.

When I arrived at the house where I thought I had seen white men at work, I thought I would look round a little. Clambering over the fence, I noiselessly approached the house, and saw lights within, and heard people talking. I made out the outline of what appeared to be a negro cabin, and, going to the side farthest from the house, stepped up to

the door, and knocked very quietly, the house being very near. A dog sprang up, and barked savagely; and a young negro girl opened the door, and asked what I wanted. I made signs to her to be silent, and entered. A very old man was there, and a very young baby. The latter belonged apparently to the young girl, although she could not have been more than fourteen or fifteen years old.

The old man was deaf, and did not at first understand who or what I was; but, when he did, he brightened up, and his eye glistened with pleasure. He told me several useful things, and cautioned me to be careful. He said that a young man named Randall—a Yankee, and one of Wilson's raiders—had called at this very house (the white folks'), and, being detected as a Yankee, had been turned over to a magistrate by the name of John Norrington, who, aided by a mean white named Jeff. Davis, took Randall out to a wood near by, stripped him, tied him to a tree, and then shot him. They threw his body into a little ravine, and shovelled some dirt upon it; and then, Davis taking his clothes, the two worthies returned to the bosoms of their families. Both had since gone as soldiers to Petersburg.

The negroes were surprised that the dog did not attack me. He was a very fierce animal, and I was the only stran-

ger he had ever allowed to approach the house. I stretched myself on the bed for a few minutes, while the girl washed and roasted some sweet-potatoes. Then I started on again, the girl regretting she could give me no more potatoes, and the old man invoking upon me all sorts of blessings. The dog again let me pass freely, and I reached the road in safety.

I had not gone far when I heard the sounds of horses galloping towards me in the distance. I was doubtful whether they were pursuing me or not. No good cover was near; but a house was not far ahead: and, as the horses drew near, I sprang over the fence, and came within a foot or two of jumping into a well. Creeping along the fence a little distance, I lay down close to it, and soon heard the horses go by; but it was too dark to distinguish them. They stopped at the gate of the house; and I heard them asking questions of some one who came out. I was morally certain they were inquiring about me, and cursed the impatience which had led me to expose myself in the daytime. After a few minutes, they started on again; and the sound of their horses' hoofs soon died away in the distance.

I was anxious to find out what the horsemen wanted, and thought there must be a negro about who would know something about it. I crept quietly up to the building, and,

after a thorough reconnoissance, knocked at the door of a house which looked too good for a negro tenement. A peep through the logs showed me a very tidy, light-colored couple; the woman spinning, and the man making baskets. The man let me in, and gave me a seat by the roaring fire. On questioning him, he told me that the men I had seen were neighbors, who had been to the post-office, and, having found a letter for his mistress, had brought it along and left it on their return. Then I knew that the building I had passed, where the horses were hitched, was the post-office, and all my fright about the horsemen went for nothing.

The man informed me it was about seven miles to the Nottaway; but he did not know whether or not there was a guard at the crossing. However, he thought there was one at Dinwiddie, which was only a short distance beyond. The woman offered me something to eat. I was not hungry, but took a sweet-potato to carry with me. It had just been roasted, and was as useful as a small stove in keeping me warm.

I set out again, but had not gone far before I heard a horse galloping behind me, and took cover in a deserted blacksmith-shop. The horse and rider soon came along, the man singing. I thought I detected a touch of the negro

in his voice, and, when he came up, scanned him as closely as the darkness would permit. I was a little in doubt, as the man, in that light, could not be distinguished from a white man; but, feeling a little reckless, stepped out into the road in front of his horse. He pulled up suddenly, and asked what I wanted. I told him I wanted to know about the road, and, if he was not in a hurry, would like to keep him company for a while. I was now sure he was in some degree a negro, and, questioning him, learned that he was a freeman, and had a plantation of his own. I did not tell him who I was, being a little doubtful about free negroes; but I sounded him, and was pretty well satisfied he would not betray me; but, as I had learned all I desired in the character of a Confederate soldier, concluded it was useless to trust him. Among other things, he said that Wilson's raiders had pretty well "cleaned him out" the last summer; but he harbored no malice against them. He said there were about forty thousand Rebels just outside of Petersburg, on the South-side Railroad.

We went along together for some distance, and I learned a great deal from him. Coming at length to a road which led to his place, he bade me good-night, at the same time pointing to a large white house, a short distance ahead, as a

Confederate colonel's, where I would be gladly welcomed and well treated. I did not question the first part of this assurance, but, as to the good treatment, had my doubts.

I trudged along the rough road, tripping over ruts and planks, and stumbling into holes : it was very tiresome ; but I did not expect much ease. The moon was obscured by clouds, and gave little or no light ; and, a little after midnight, a terrible storm of wind and rain came on. I could find no shelter but the trees, and was soon wet through. The wind howled among the trees, twisting and swaying them about as if they were a host of shadowy demons engaged in mortal combat. I never witnessed so fierce a storm ; and, while it lasted, the excitement made me forget all discomfort.

The storm did not continue more than an hour ; and, when it was over, I was utterly exhausted ; and I was somewhat disheartened too, for I could not see my way clear. The negro had told me of large numbers of Rebels ahead ; and I knew that I was coming to a place where my life would be in imminent peril. I was cold also, and wet through ; and every thing looked dark and gloomy. I remembered the negro's prayer for me, and prayed myself, not in words, but in thought. I really felt stronger and more encouraged after

it, and, plucking up new spirit, walked on again as briskly as I could over the rough, miry road.

The wagon-camps soon became numerous, their fires gleaming in every little grove by the roadside. At some of them a few men were standing about the fires ; but the most of them were lying with their feet to the fire, looking like so many mummies, as the firelight glistened on the brass plates of their equipments, and on their muskets, which were resting against the trees and wagons. Most of the camps were a little distance from the road ; and, as I went by very quietly, the soldiers did not see me.

A little after midnight, I came to a long bridge, — so long, that, in the darkness, I could see no end to it, — and was doubtful whether to cross it, or to go above or below, ford the river, and then come back to the road again. I listened and looked intently for some time, but, hearing and seeing nothing, advanced on tip-toe, with my eyes and ears on the alert. I had gone half-way over, when I heard footsteps on the farther end advancing towards me. I about-faced, and started back as quietly and rapidly as possible, and tried to find cover near by. A road turned off to the right. Turning into it, I walked on a little ways, and crouched down behind a clump of bushes.

The man turned into the same road ; and, seeing a collision was inevitable, I made a movement to better my position. He was just opposite to me, when the gravel grated under my foot, and he started for the other side of the road. I sprang after and collared him, but instantly let go my hold ; for no eye-balls but a darky's could show in the darkness as his did. I laughed to myself, and proceeded to calm the fears of the ague-stricken negro, but was rejoiced that the encounter had turned out so comical ; for, to be entirely frank, I was a minute before almost as badly frightened as he. He said he had not seen or heard me until I was just ready to spring upon him. He thought at first I was a woman, but, when I sprang upon him, saw I was a man. He told me that the river was the Nottaway ; that no guards were at the bridge ; and the nearest ones were twelve miles away, at Dinwiddie Court House.

After the fellow got over his fright, I took a fancy to him, and told him every thing. He was very much pleased when he learned who and what I was, and asked me to come to his house, where he could hide me “ mighty well.” It was near morning ; I could not go much farther ; and so I decided to accept his hospitality.

As we walked on towards his house, he told me his name

was John Randolph ! I was surprised and pleased, and accepted the coincidence as a good omen. I mentioned the other John Randolph ; but he did not know him. He said the free negro I had met a short distance back was a good man, and would not have harmed me. He knew of but one negro who would betray me ; and his house I had passed long before : so I need borrow no trouble on that account. He corroborated the old darky's account of the death of Randall, relating it precisely as he did ; and said that the body of a negro, a United-States soldier, who had escaped and been recaptured, was then hanging a little beyond the bridge over the Nottaway. He offered me some apple-brandy, which I drank, finding it very invigorating, though not very strong. It cost the negro twelve dollars a quart.

We had a little conversation about the currency system, and he said that a basket of chips would bring five dollars in Confederate money ; but, though every thing commanded so high a price, it made little difference, as, none wanting to hold it, the money was kept in pretty lively circulation. He also told me there had been more fighting in the Shenandoah Valley ; but he could not tell how it resulted, though he thought the Yankees had the best of it.

We soon arrived at the plantation where he lived. His

own house was neat and comfortable, and the mansion-house was a splendid building. We went to the back of the mansion by a drive-way, and trod very quietly; for Confederate officers were quartered in the dwelling. When John came to his cabin, he took a key from under the door, unlocked it, and asked me to enter. His wife — a light-colored mulatto — and two girls were sleeping in the room, and the fire-light showed that they were all quite pretty. John himself was a good-looking fellow, with mustache and whiskers; and he had a watch, which indicated three, A.M. He aroused his wife; and she soon cooked me a good breakfast, with something to carry with me on the next day's journey.

After breakfast, I set out for a deserted tobacco-barn far off in the field, where I was to hide until nightfall, when John would come for me. He went along to show me where it was, and, when we arrived there, made a scaffolding upon some poles, on which I might lie during the day.

It was a cold morning; and the wind shivered through the chinks in the barn, and made me very uncomfortable. Some one was firing a gun in the woods nearly all the day; but the sound kept at a respectful distance, and did not alarm me. About nine in the evening, John came, and made a

little fire ; for I was so cold, I could hardly move. We then went back to the house, where I got warmed nicely.

John advised me to turn off the road this side of Dinwiddie Court House, at a plantation which he described, where I should find certain negroes, who would show me the way to the Weldon Railroad, and guide me past the Rebel pickets, if there were any. I had anticipated great difficulty in passing the pickets, and was glad of the least assistance. He offered me some money ; but I told him I had no need of it : and this reminds me that the other John Randolph, when speaking of taking me down to Gaston, tendered me money. He said I should meet numbers of negroes on the road, as it was Saturday night. They would be going to the houses of their wives. Leaving my address, to be given to any passing Union soldier, I bade them all a grateful good-by, and set out again on my journey.

I had not gone far before I caught up with an old dorky, who seemed anxious to keep me company ; but, not far beyond the bridge, he turned off upon a branch road, and I was left alone again. The night was very cold ; and, to keep warm, I had to walk briskly. When I came near to where I thought the Dinwiddie Bridge should be, I observed a large mansion on the left, far back from the road, and heard some

one near by chopping wood. I was very cold, and longed to sit by a fire a little while : so I went up the drive-way leading to the house. Going to the left, I discovered a rudely light pouring through the chinks of a cabin, and, peeping in, saw three or four negroes gathered about some blazing logs. Liking their looks, I rapped at the door. An old woman let me in, and I took a direct route to the fire.

Two mulatto girls were seated in the corner, and one of them was the prettiest I had seen at the South. She had beautiful brown hair and eyes ; delicate, regular features ; and was very lady-like in appearance. I was also much struck with her intelligence. She brought me a book, — a volume of “*The Wide, Wide World.*” I had read it when a boy, and it looked like an old friend. She said she liked it very much. I told her I wanted information of the whereabouts of the Rebels, and their plans ; and, going into another room, she called her husband.

When he came, I thought of Shakspeare’s “*Midsummer Night’s Dream*,” — of Titania and her long-eared lover. He was a stout, robust negro, as black as midnight, and, at first sight, awfully homely ; but he improved somewhat on acquaintance. He told me a great deal about the strength and disposition of the Rebel forces, and, in the course of conver-

sation, said that he was an officer's servant, just returned from the Shenandoah Valley. He was at the fight at Winchester with his master, who was then at the house with the white folks and some other soldiers. I asked for a pencil, and made a few memoranda such as I should understand, but which could not be deciphered in case I was taken. I was somewhat amused at the slack allegiance which the negro rendered his master. The beautiful girl brought me a fine long pencil, which I saw by the stamp was one of Faber's; and, when I got through, wanted to give it to me. I declined to take it; and then she brought me two enormous red apples.

Leaving my name and address with my new friends, I set out again. It was now nearly morning; and I hastened on so as to reach before daylight the cabin John Randolph had described. His description was so definite, that I had no difficulty in finding it. A number of negro men were there, and one of them was just setting out in the direction I wanted to go; and, when he went, I went with him. We took an almost imperceptible foot-path, using the greatest caution, and crossing a creek on the remains of a bridge which had been partially destroyed by Wilson's raiders. The man pointed out a mill which they had burned. He said the dis-

tance from the plank-road to the Weldon Railroad was from fifteen to eighteen miles ; and from Clarksville to Dinwiddie, seventy-two miles.

We had not gone over four miles before we came to another plantation. Here the negro left me concealed behind a tree while he went to reconnoitre the premises. Presently he came back, and we entered a poor-looking cabin. A number of young negroes, dressed in Confederate uniforms, were in the room ; and I was somewhat doubtful of their character. They noticed this, and did their best to re-assure me.

Presently a white man came in, also dressed in uniform. I sprang up, and thought I was surely betrayed ; but he advanced, and accosted me politely and pleasantly. I did not know what to make of him, and told him so ; at which they all laughed, telling me that he was a slave just as they were. I could scarcely believe it. He was a large, fine-looking man, with straight, light-colored hair, blue eyes, and a florid complexion. Accustomed as I had become to all shades of negro complexion, I was puzzled with him. There was not the least indication of negro blood about him ; in fact, his skin was much lighter than mine.

He sat down, and they and he told me his story. He was

married to a mulatto girl named Lucy, who belonged to the plantation where we were. He had lived on the place adjoining ; but one day his master became frightened about the Yankees, and started with all his slaves for Georgia. This one escaped just beyond the Meheria River, and made his way back to his wife, who had since been able to see him only in stolen interviews ; he being obliged to stay in the woods in the vicinity. However, as the planter was old, and not able to move about much, he was able to visit his wife quite often.

About daybreak, this man and I went out to a little piece of woods near by, and had quite a chat ; he giving me many valuable hints as to my future operations. When the sun was about an hour high, a very graceful and pretty mulatto woman came to us, bringing a warm breakfast of fresh pork and yam-potatoes, hot corn-bread, and sweet milk. The potatoes were red outside and yellow within, and the best I ever ate.

Alvin, the white slave, had been thinking of going North for some time ; and all the negroes had advised him to go, and, now that I had come, urged him strongly to take advantage of the opportunity. I told him I should be very glad to have his company, and urged him to start ; alleging as

a reason why he should, that the season would soon be too inclement to allow of his remaining out of doors. His wife, however, clung to him, and begged him not to leave her, and, although she acknowledged the force of our arguments, would not consent to his going.

We spent the forenoon in the bushes. He had a fine six-shooter, of Colt's pattern, and, I thought, would not have hesitated to use it, had occasion required. Several Confederate soldiers rode by our place of concealment; but they did not see us. About half a dozen also were at the house, having a merry time with the young ladies. I slept some during the morning; but Alvin appeared to be studying intently about something. I suppose he was trying to decide to leave his wife, who was too delicate to go with him.

About noon, Lucy brought us a bountiful dinner of fricasseed chicken, roast pork, sweet and common potatoes, cabbage, and a nice pudding. She, Alvin, and I then sat down in the driest spot we could find (for the place was swampy), and were eating, when another mulatto lady came out to us. She was dressed in black, with a very capacious crinoline; and looked very much as if she had been boxed up on Broadway, and freshly opened in Virginia. Her features were good, and she had a very high forehead. Other negroes

soon joined us ; and, having eaten our dinner, we invited them to finish the food, which they did, sitting down in an easy way, and showing considerable natural refinement. One of the men brought a bottle of apple-brandy, which one of the women discovered, and, after a regular gale, got from him. We had a little all round ; mine being so strong, it nearly took my head off. Altogether, it was a merry picnic ; and I enjoyed it, though I was a fugitive, and my companions were negroes.

They proposed that one of their number should go with me that night as far as Rowanty Creek, where was a man who would give me another "lift." Alvin could not get his wife's permission to accompany me, and so bade me good-by when I started, which was soon after dark. An old man went with me, I carrying his bundle, which helped him along considerably. When we neared the old man's cabin, he pointed it out to me at the farther end of a long clearing ; and, entering the clearing, we approached it quietly. We had not gone far, however, before a gun was fired only two or three rods from us. I was somewhat startled by the report ; but, as I heard the noise of geese flying overhead, I concluded it was some one firing at random, which it probably was.

The negro left me in the clearing while he went to the house and reconnoitred. He presently returned, saying all was right at the house ; and we went there together. I was about going on among the “quarters ;” but the negro marched straight to the “great house,” and entered. I supposed he would soon come out, and show me to one of the cabins : so I waited outside until he came to the door again and asked me to come in. I inquired, in some surprise, if there were not white folks at the mansion ; and he said, “No.” It appeared that Lucy’s master (a Major Rony) owned the place, which had formerly been occupied by his daughter and son-in-law ; but, they having gone to Texas, the house had been turned over to the negroes who worked the plantation. We entered a pleasant room, where were several good-looking negroes ; and the old man left for a plantation a little farther on.

The negroes placed a chair for me near the fire ; and, seating ourselves in a cosey half-circle, we chatted away for a while very pleasantly. My companions were two pretty girls and an old woman, — old, but small and smart enough to be a girl of sixteen. She had been at the North, and was very well informed on ordinary subjects. She told me of the killing of Randall, and of several other things substan-

tially as I had heard them; and spoke also of four of Wilson's raiders who had been left wounded at Dinwiddie Court House. Some of the women there were anxious to poison them, but, being in a minority, were prevented. However, when the men were nearly recovered, they died very suddenly and mysteriously, and were buried near the bridge over which I had passed.

These women told me all about the strength and disposition of the Rebel forces. They were particularly desirous I should tell our generals about a place called Stony-Creek Depot, where a large quantity of supplies, wagons, and cars, were stored, which it would be well to destroy.

We were sitting there, coseily enjoying ourselves, when some one smashed open the door, and ran away, yelling terrifically. I sprang up, wondering what was the matter, and very soon discovered a number of negroes running about, screaming "Fire!" The flames were bursting through the roof, and had already attained good headway at the farther end of the house. Taking my things, I put them into one of the cabins, and then, at the suggestion of the negroes, kept out of sight, lest some one, seeing the fire from the road, should come over and detect me. I thought the negroes could put out the fire, but soon saw it gaining on

them rapidly. They were fast growing discouraged ; and, as they had been very kind to me, I thought I could do no less than help them. Emerging from my hiding-place, I went to work with a will, first getting together every thing that would hold water, and then setting every man, woman, and child to bringing it from a large spring not far off. I encouraged them by every means in my power ; and soon they were doing their best.

I went up stairs, where a man was trying to do something ; but he had become sick, and was fast giving out. Standing up in a chair, I cut a hole through the shingles with an axe ; and then, the old woman handing me water, I deluged the whole outside of the roof. The heat was almost unbearable at first ; but I soon got the fire under a little, and then, forcing myself through the hole in the roof, throwing water judiciously, and tearing off the burning boards and shingles, speedily got the flames under. It was an hour or more, however, before the fire was altogether extinguished. It would burst forth every now and then in some new place ; but finally the last spark went out, and I began to think it was time to conceal myself. I wondered that no one had yet come : but the house was a long way from anywhere ; and, being surrounded by high trees, the fire was probably not seen

from a distance, or, if seen, the bright blaze did not last long, and any one who had started would be apt to turn back. As it was, no one came.

We partially replaced the disordered furniture, and then sat down to talk the matter over. The negroes were very thankful to me, and I was glad to have been able to serve them. I had lost my cap, and it was not found until the next morning. I dropped it while fighting the fire in the garret; and the old woman had thrown it out of the window, and forgotten all about it.

The man who was going to show me the way through the swamps was sick, and the others were afraid he would not be able to go with me. They thought I had better wait until the next night, however, and he might be better: meanwhile I could hide in the house. I did not lie down until midnight, but then slept soundly until morning, and woke feeling quite refreshed. I had burned and bruised my hands somewhat, but, aside from that, was in good condition.

The old woman made me a nice breakfast; and after breakfast, as I was sitting by the fire, a little darky ran into the room, saying that a squad of soldiers were coming to the house. As the house was in a clearing, I could not leave

it without being seen ; and it would have been fool-hardy to attempt to run from mounted men. They did not know I was there, unless the negroes had betrayed me ; and I concluded I could hide from them easily. Harriet, the prettiest of the girls, escorted me up stairs, and concealed me in a little nook under the roof of an ell-part of the building. She said she would make the soldiers talk if they came about the house, so I might hear what they said.

The soldiers soon came all about the building, and another squad went to a log-barn near by. The latter began to rob the barn of its fodder, in spite of the remonstrances of the negroes ; and the soldiers lounging about the house, to try to beg or buy some molasses. One of them had some coffee, which he called “ pure Java ; ” and he wanted to exchange a bagful of it for a pint of molasses : but the negroes were not anxious to trade. They seemed only intent on keeping the soldiers out of the house.

The girl Harriet amused me very much by her conversation with the soldiers. As they remained at the house all day, it would take too much space to detail all they said. Their remarks about the war were highly edifying. They appeared to be discouraged, and not very hostile to the Yankees. Some quite good-looking men were among them,

and many who were tolerably well dressed. Their horses were rather poor in flesh, but looked smart and active.

The negroes, seeing that the fodder was fast disappearing, determined to save all they could by bringing it into the house. A soldier had come along who was a friend of Major Rony's; and he told the negroes, if they would give him two or three bundles of fodder, he would pretend to be a guard sent from camp, and would not allow any more to be taken by the others. He did so; and the other soldiers, thinking he was a guard, did not dare to take any more. It was, however, already half gone.

The soldiers spoke to the negroes about the fire, and asked how it occurred. The negroes answered that a man was going by the house, when a flock of geese flew over. He fired at them; and the wadding from his gun, lodging on the roof, had set it on fire. This was a falsehood, intended partially to shield them from the wrath of Major Rony. The real state of the case was this: A fire had been kindled on the hearth of one of the upper chambers; and a spark, snapping from it, had lodged in among some fire-wood piled against a wooden wainscot. The wood had set the wainscot on fire, and the flames had climbed up to the roof. This was

as plain as a pikestaff. The negroes chopped away the wainscoting that the major might not detect it.

While the negroes were bringing in the fodder, two others came down to the plantation from Major Rony's. I had met them there ; in fact, they were at the picnic. One of them came to me in the garret ; and we lay there together, making whispered comments on the Rebels as they moved about the lawn. The negro was a witty fellow, and enjoyed watching the soldiers as they walked or rode unconsciously about below us, so near that their heads were often not more than five or six feet away.

The Rebels took a number of things which were lying about, mostly horse-gear ; but behaved tolerably well, being evidently afraid of Major Rony. The two men who had come down were going to another plantation, which was in the direction I wished to go ; and as George, the man who was to have gone with me, was still too sick to travel, they consented to wait until dark, and accompany me. Harriet was to come down the next day to look after some swine which were there ; and she would show me the way through the swamp.

At noon, Harriet brought me a good dinner ; and I quite enjoyed myself, feeling no concern on account of the Rebels,

though there were probably two hundred about the house throughout the day. They were a rough set generally, and looked as if they might bear a great deal of hardship. The negro said they belonged to Hampton's division of cavalry, and to Mederrin's, Berringer's, and Buller's brigades, which were encamped about a mile distant. The negro told me of an affair which happened to Buller's brigade just after the fight at Ream's Station, which is worth repeating. It seemed that nearly all of the brigade had clothed themselves in blue overcoats by stripping our dead, wounded, and prisoners. As they were returning to camp, the remainder of the division fell upon them, and, before the mistake was discovered, killed and wounded quite a number.

When it came night, the Rebels nearly all returned to their camp. The negroes who were to accompany me were impatient to start: but one of the soldiers remained at the door, making some bargain about his washing; and I had to wait until he was gone before coming down from the garret. He went at last; and I was going out, having taken leave of the negroes, when another Rebel rode up on some trivial errand. The negroes were waiting for me at the eastern end of the clearing; and, seeing no immediate prospect of the soldier leaving, I leaped out of a window on the opposite

side of the house, and, scouting quietly through the corn-field, soon came upon the negroes.

We tramped along for two hours, the negroes using great caution, and watching narrowly for any Rebels who might chance to be roving about. One of them was going to work at Stony-Creek Depot, the other on a plantation near by. They intended accompanying me as far as the place where the swine were kept, when we all would take up our quarters in a deserted cabin near by until morning. They thought I had better wait there until Harriet came down, when she would show me the swamp-path. At last we arrived at the cabin. They somewhat expected to find a runaway there, who was trying to get to our lines ; but he was gone, and had probably already started.

To show how independent the negroes on this place were, I will tell a little circumstance about Harriet. She was supposed to occupy the cabin, and to stay there, caring for the swine. But, running loose, the swine would not suffer from inattention ; and, disliking to live in the lonesome place, Harriet, without her master's knowledge, made her home at the mansion. The woman at the Clarksville Ferry had given me a few matches ; and with them we made a fire, and I passed the rest of the night in sound slumber.

The negroes awoke before daybreak ; and, being anxious to start on, I asked them if they could not direct me, so I might find the way through the swamp by myself. They thought, as I had come that far without getting into trouble, I should have none in getting through, but said I would have to keep my wits about me, as there was no path in the swamp. I should have to stop directly west of the place I wanted to come out at, — between two pickets, — and then go straight towards the rising sun. I must look out for snakes also : for, though it was late in the season, I might, in stepping on some rotten log, disturb one ; and his bite would be sure death.

After passing the swamp, I should come first upon a dirt road, and then — about a quarter of a mile farther — upon the Weldon Railroad. Beyond that they knew nothing, but thought that, once across the railroad, I should be safe, as no negro who had gone that way ever came back ; and they thought all had got through safely.

I did not like the idea of remaining about the cabin all day merely to see Harriet, who, at the best, could guide me but a short distance into the swamp. Besides, the shanty was on a road leading from one Rebel camp to another, and there would likely be soldiers passing upon it. So I con-

cluded to avoid the danger, get the best start possible, and make my own way through the swamp as well as I could. The negroes directed me to a point on the edge of the swamp. I could not see the place in the dim light of the early dawn : but their directions were so minute, that I could not very well miss it ; and, bidding them good-by, I started for the trackless wilderness.

For about half a mile of the way, there was an old path ; and at the end of it I came upon the ruins of a plantation-house. From there I went on in a north-east direction, keeping upon the high and cleared land as long as I could, according to the directions. The swamp, for thirty or forty rods, was not very wet ; but, beyond that distance, a shallow, stagnant lake lay spread out before me as far as I could see. A heavy growth of trees, shooting high up and casting gloomy shadows around, great prostrate rotten logs, and flaunting moss floating about in the misty air, made a rather dismal picture. The coming sun was flushing the eastern horizon. I could catch glimpses of it through the thickly springing trees, and, facing a little to the north, plunged into the swamp.

One of my shoes was so badly worn, that I had to tie a string about it to keep the upper-leather and sole together.

This came off in the mud, and I had to use great care not to lose my shoe. The water the most of the way was up to my knees, and the mud was bottomless. However, by stepping on submerged branches, I avoided sinking; though now and then I had to spring and leap about very lively to keep from sticking fast.

I rested occasionally on logs, using them also for foot bridges when I could do so, but soon began to think the morass had no end; for still the endless column of trees, the glassy reaches of slimy water, and the broken network of rotten logs, lay spread out before me. But there is an end to every thing,—even to Virginia swamps: so I kept on as best I could, with my face towards the rising sun.

When I first entered the swamp, I had heard several discharges of a musket a little to the left and quite near to me. I did not know what to make of it, and concluded, if some one was out gunning, they were at it bright and early. I put as much swamp between me and the reports as I could in a limited space of time; but, after four or five discharges, the sounds died away, and I heard no more of them. I did not then know what to make of them, and do not now.

After floundering about for at least two miles, I came to running water of considerable depth. This I concluded was

what the negroes had called Rowanty Creek. Forging it, I kept on about two miles farther; when I emerged from the swamp, and came at last upon higher ground. I was dead tired, and my legs were badly bruised with stumbling over broken sticks and knotty logs; but I went on a little farther before I sat down to rest, and clean the mud and wring the water from my clothes. I was soon somewhat rested, and then started again. I had now come upon cleared ground, and had to use great care not to be seen, and so took advantage of all the little hollows and woods. No buildings, except a fine-looking plantation-house about a quarter of a mile away, were in sight; and the morning was somewhat foggy. All this was in my favor.

At the end of a long half-mile, I came upon the high-road. I was delighted to see it,—it seemed like an old friend; and I could hardly restrain a joyful exclamation. In fact, all of the places to which I had been directed were so constantly in my mind, that, when I came to them, they seemed old friends. Even the Dismal Swamp carried me through a chain of Rebel pickets.

Looking sharply up and down the road, and seeing no one, I skipped across it to the woods on the other side, and then pressed forward. Less than a quarter of a mile be-

yond I came upon the Weldon Railroad, and my spirits rose to even a higher pitch; and a feeling of safety and confidence came upon me, which I had not felt before. The track at this point was cut through a heavy pine-forest, and excavated to the depth of eight or ten feet; the earth being thrown up in two long yellow heaps on either side. Standing in the edge of the wood near the road, I looked carefully up and down the long vista of pine-trees which crowded closely down to the track to see if any one was there who would be likely to give me trouble. Away towards Ream's Station, where the two lines of rails came almost to a point, I thought I saw something moving like men. They were, however, too far away to cause me any difficulty; and, going a little farther down the road, I crawled across, and got into the woods on the opposite side. I knew that our forces held Ream's Station, which was about eight miles to the north, and thought it likely that the Rebels had a body of troops this side of them. Their lines, however, did not probably extend far beyond the railroad; and I decided to go six or eight miles in an easterly direction, and then to strike north towards our army, which lay between City Point and Petersburg.

The sun was a little more than an hour high, and the

morning a beautiful one. A plantation was on my left ; and I crossed the road, and went among the pines : but no one saw me, though they were grinding sorghum, as I knew by the shrieking and groaning of the mill. I made my way as directly as I could towards the east, though I had to make long detours to avoid crossing open fields. At last I came to a narrow road leading east, and followed it, occasionally turning off where it crossed long openings. I passed one complete line of intrenchments stretching as far as the eye could reach, and several smaller breastworks commanding the road. These were built opposite swampy places, where cavalry would be compelled to keep the road, and where even infantry would have difficulty in getting through the swamp, owing to the thickness of the trees and underbrush. All these roads were deserted. I crossed several little rivulets during the morning, the water of which was very refreshing ; and I think the best water I ever drank was in Virginia.

I had left the railroad, and gone about two miles, when I saw a house ahead. A thick grove was between me and it, and I did not see it until closely upon it. The country was open for a long distance ahead ; and I saw that I should have to make a detour of several miles to avoid the plantations

which were scattered along the side of the road. I determined not to do this unless absolutely obliged to, and so went up near the house to reconnoitre. Presently a woman came out on the veranda. I did not fancy her looks, and crawled back out of sight. I did not like to turn back, and thought it just as dangerous in one place as another.

In front of the house, and on the opposite side of the road, was a large cornfield. A Virginia fence ran along the side of the cornfield, and up over a hill, on the top of which were a few scattered trees and bushes, and one round, compact clump of cedars, which I noticed for its beauty, not thinking it was to be one of the many means of saving me from Rebel clutches. Beyond the hill I could see the tops of other trees, and judged I could keep among them until I had passed the cleared opening. I was in doubt whether I had yet passed the Rebel pickets, and decided to be a little careful. I thought I might possibly meet some of our foraging parties or cavalry scouting about, but knew I was just as likely to meet Rebels on the same business, and decided to keep out of sight until nightfall; then I would try to find a negro who could tell me where I was.

The fence ran over the hill at such an angle, that, by keeping close to it, I could not be seen from the house. I went

back the road a little distance, then over the fence, and then, crouching low down among the standing corn, crawled up the slope. I travelled in this manner until nearly to the top of the hill ; when, seeing a persimmon-tree a rod or two out in the cornfield, I went to it to gather some persimmons. The stalks of corn were thin and small, but, at that distance from the house, were a tolerable screen. I gathered some of the fruit, and, sitting down at the foot of a tree on the side opposite the house, unrolled my blanket, took out my bread, and proceeded to breakfast. The clump of trees I have spoken of was two or three rods ahead, and about a rod of open space was between it and the fence. A little farther up, on the other side of the fence, and on the crest of the hill, were more bushes.

As I sat there eating my breakfast, I heard the faint beating of drums, and thought I could distinguish the strains of a band far off in the distance. The sounds resembled national airs ; and I felt happy enough, thinking that I soon would be under the starry banner. The sounds probably came from the garrison at Ream's Station, which I had neared considerably.

I was sitting there, unsuspecting of danger, and thinking on the glorious prospect of being once again within the

Union lines, and once more among comrades and friends, when I heard a thumping sound on the crest of the hill, and directly after saw emerge from the bushes a mounted soldier. I lost my appetite directly, but, except drawing my head partially behind the tree, remained perfectly immovable.

The man was a stout, muscular fellow, mounted on a large black horse, and, when he first came in sight, was looking towards the east, but, when nearly opposite to me, turned his eyes towards the west, and, as I thought, directly at me. I was about to get up, supposing my tramping was over; and I felt terribly, to be recaptured in that silly way after all I had suffered: but something in the man's face held me still. He seemed to look over me; and his eye gave out no sign of recognition, though I was not more than two rods distant. I noticed his every movement,—his dangling sabre, his carbine, his pistols, and the three canteens which were slung over his shoulders. I also noticed that he was well dressed, and wore a black plume in his hat. All this I saw in a second of time, and the man had passed me! I could scarcely believe my senses. I concluded, that, pretending not to see me, he was only going farther down the fence to cut me off from the road; and I watched him with every nerve strained as he trotted his horse easily down the

hill. He sat slouchingly in the saddle, with apparently nothing on his mind, and soon reached the road. I did not watch him farther, but, snatching up my things, started up the hill, full of delighted wonder at my escape.

I was hurrying along the fence, and had just passed the clump of bushes, when, just ahead of me, I saw what startled me more than the horseman. Just over the fence, among some low bushes, were half a dozen horses tied, and seated on the ground, beside a low fire, half a dozen Rebel soldiers. I could see only their heads, and a thin spiral of smoke curling up from among them. Their horses were saddled; and their blankets, sabres, and pistols were slung upon the animals.

I did not stop long to look, but, with my hopes decidedly below par, slunk back among the bushes. Among them were several rotten logs, one immense overturned stump, and a perfect snarl of briars and underbrush; the whole not covering a quarter of an acre. I crawled into the deepest part of the thicket, making as little noise as a cat, and lay down to think over the situation.

I could account for my escape only in this way: The sun was shining in the man's eyes; it being yet early morning, and he riding towards the east. He probably was not particularly on the alert; and my clothing being of the color of

the ground, and my blue cap partially hidden by the trees, his eyes did not rest on me : besides, his attention was attracted to the road.

Soon, as I lay there in the bushes, I heard some one getting over the fence, and thought at first the soldiers had heard me, and were coming to find me. It was, however, only one of the men gathering corn for the horses ; and I was still safe. I could hear their conversation quite distinctly, though they did not talk much, — only an occasional word to their horses, or a casual remark among themselves. I had to lie perfectly still, as quantities of dry sticks lay all about, and the snapping of one would be likely to rouse their suspicion.

The horseman who came so near without seeing me soon returned the way he had gone. I concluded he had been down to the house for whiskey, milk, or molasses ; and I noticed that he and two others went down several times during the day. The swamp-water was heavy in my clothes, and I was very uncomfortable lying so perfectly immovable on the damp ground ; but I thanked God heartily for my escape, which seemed to me little short of miraculous. The men came over into the field several times during the afternoon

to get corn for their horses ; and the day dragged slowly on, but at last the night came.

When it was sufficiently dark, I crawled out of my place of concealment, using the utmost precaution. I went on my hands and knees for some distance towards the road ; my legs being so stiff and awkward, I could not walk quietly. Soon I came in sight of a house not far away, down in a hollow. A bright fire was burning near it ; and, approaching it carefully, I saw it was under some molasses-kettles, and that two or three white folks were standing near it.

Regaining the road, which passed just in front of the house I had reconnoitred, I was hastening quietly along the road, when some one made a noise like a suppressed cough, as if to attract my attention. It came from the bushes by the side of the road, and the cough sounded like a woman's ; but I gave it no attention. Not far on, I came to a fork in the road, and was debating which way to go, when I heard voices following. Stepping behind some small pine-trees, I waited for them to approach. I listened attentively to distinguish whether they were negroes or white people, but was puzzled to decide. As they passed by, I peered through the bushes with all my eyes, and, concluding they were negroes, stepped out and spoke to them. They were much astonished, and

not a little frightened ; but after I had announced who I was, and asked their advice and assistance, they promised to help me.

They told me that one of the roads was the Jerusalem Plank-road, the other a private way leading to a neighboring plantation ; and that it was lucky I had not gone on the former, as cavalry were passing continually on it. I related my adventure of the morning ; and they said the horsemen I had come upon were the pickets of a concealed cavalry camp, and, if they had taken me, I should have stood a poor chance for my life. They belonged to Berringer's brigade, — about a hundred and fifty rangers who encamped in out-of-the-way places to avoid surprise by our cavalry.

One of the negroes went forward some distance as an advance-guard. He was to cough in case of any trouble ; but we neared the plantation without being alarmed. A bright fire was burning in front of one of the cabins, and a negro was at work near it. Our "advance-guard" spoke to him, and soon after the fire was put out. The negroes did not dare to let me into any of their cabins, it being so early that white folks might visit them : so I staid out in the orchard until about ten o'clock at night. It was very cold, and I found it difficult to keep quiet and warm at the same time.

At last they let me into one of the shanties, and I got a little rest, which I very much needed. My entertainers promised to pilot me through a swamp which would carry me past the cavalry pickets, and said, that, when I had gone beyond the Jerusalem Plank-road, I should meet no more Rebels. This was cheering news, and on the strength of it I slept soundly. Shortly before daybreak, one of the negroes awakened me, and I started out with him on my journey. As we walked on, he related several incidents of operations in that quarter. The only achievement of the Rebels for a long time was the capture of a herd of cows. The negro said they made a great ado over it, and bragged as if they had whipped the whole North. He accompanied me to the edge of the swamp, and then, giving me full and clear directions how to proceed, left me.

I passed the swamp without much difficulty, it not being so bad as the other, and, having gone through it, came upon a broad, lonely expanse of country, which reminded me of descriptions I had read of English moors. After going about two miles through the tall, coarse grass and weeds, I came upon the Jerusalem Plank-road, and, crossing it with my usual caution, pushed on into the woods on the opposite side. The sun had just risen on another

beautiful day, and I enjoyed my tramp through the odorous pine-forest in the fresh morning air. My plan was to strike two or three miles into the wood, and then to take a northerly course to the road leading to City Point, on which, the negro said, our pickets were stationed. When I thought I had left the road far enough behind, I turned towards the north, and, the wood being but little obstructed by underbrush, made rapid progress ; keeping my eye and ears on the alert, and treading as lightly as possible.

After a while I came to the vicinity of a plantation, as I knew by the cries of various domestic fowls. I tried to get a look at things ; but it was not imperatively necessary, and I soon gave it up. Changing my course a little more to the eastward, I shortly came upon another plantation, which, after a reconnoissance, I discovered was deserted. It was quite an extensive place, and looked like a little village. I rummaged about the building, which had been vacated only a short time, and found many articles useful to a farmer or housekeeper. I took a sickle, thinking it might perhaps be of use against dogs, and gathered and ate some ripe tomatoes.

About a mile farther on, I came to another clearing, — a large one, with a house and outbuildings, which looked very

imposing. I thought it very likely it was on the road I was trying to find, and, desiring to get information, set out for some cabins on the farther side of the plantation. Keeping in the edge of the timber, I came upon the road as I had expected, and, crossing, kept on towards the plantation.

The underbrush was so thick, I could scarcely get through it; and I made very slow progress, but at last arrived in the vicinity of the cabins. They were at a little distance from the edge of the woods; but a tongue of trees and bushes extended very near to them. I kept on this tongue, which was wet, springy, and thickly overgrown with cane, until I came near the buildings. About a dozen negro children were playing about; and, as I could see no one else, I concluded to accost them. I floundered through the mud, and came as quietly as I could to the side the children were on, and, showing myself to them, beckoned to the largest to come to me. I looked as harmless and indifferent as I could; but, instead of coming towards me, they made a grand rush in the opposite direction, some of them screaming most lustily. Their screams brought a negro woman to the window of one of the cabins. I beckoned to her with all the eloquence I could throw into gestures; and, hushing the children, she came out to where I was. She was young and

good-looking. I liked her face very much, and trusted her at once, telling her I wanted to find some one who would direct me to our pickets. She said she would send a man down as soon as he came in for dinner, which would be soon ; and she stood talking with me a few moments before she started to go back to the cabin, saying as she did so, " You is a right nice-lookin' man, I declar." I felt highly flattered. She had not been gone many minutes before she returned, bringing some cold roast pork, hot sweet-potatoes, corn-bread, and a pitcher of milk. I ate heartily, and had some left.

As I lay in the reeds waiting for the man, an old white hound came down, and stood for a time looking at me in an undecided way, as if she did not know whether to make friends or not. I tossed her a bit of bread, and she became very affectionate. I then lay down again ; and she lay down by me, while I fell into a short sleep. Presently I was awakened by some one approaching. It was the negro. He said there was one more picket-post to pass, and then all I would have to fear would be some scouting-parties. He offered to take me, when it came night, to a man who would guide me to our pickets. This made me

feel as if I was already within our lines ; and, in thinking of home and friends, the afternoon passed quickly away.

Only one thing occurred to disturb me. I was lying very still, but, changing my position, heard something spring away from near me with a growl, and, looking up, saw a large, savage-looking dog glaring at me with what seemed murderous intentions. I tossed him a bit of bread ; but he took no notice of it, and went tearing off. I thought I was well rid of him ; but in ten minutes he was back again, with half a dozen blood-hounds at his heels. I faced them coolly ; but they came towards me, and began barking fiercely, and making short leaps at my legs and body. Grasping my sickle firmly, I prepared for tearing times. The negro woman, seeing my predicament, ran for the man ; and he came just in the nick of time. By coaxing and blows, he got them away, and enticed them off to the swamp, hunting. In a short time I heard their deep baying in the distance, and felt thankful their attention was turned in another direction. The old white hound soon came back, and lay down again by my side ; and the dogs also came back after a while. They looked at me with perplexity on their faces at sight of the old hound, but at last trotted off, and left me unmolested.

When night came, I went to one of the cabins, and, sitting

down by the fire, chatted with the negroes. As I did not anticipate any further use for the sickle, I gave it to one of them. They were much pleased with it, and, I suppose, with me ; for they paid me some fine compliments. It was well I got out of the South as soon as I did ; for, had I staid longer, I might have become utterly conceited. However, I think the negroes spoke so often of my personal appearance because their masters were continually telling them that the Yankees were ogres and horrid creatures ; and I, being a Yankee, was a living refutation of the slander, which they were delighted to see. The masters told absurd stories of how the Yankees treated the negroes ; but, with a very few exceptions, these tales were utterly discredited. In the course of my journey, two or three darkies asked me some absurd and rather dubious questions, and, on my answering them satisfactorily, seemed to have a great load lifted from their minds.

About nine o'clock at night, the guide and I started for the house of the free negro, where I should find the man who would show me to our pickets. We had gone about a mile and a half, when the guide suddenly stopped, and pointed ahead. I could see the forms of two men ; and, dodging quietly into the bushes, we waited for them to pass. As

they were going by, the guide made a sound as of a bird disturbed in its nest; and, the sound being answered in duplicate, he stepped out of the bushes, and spoke to them. One of them was the man whom we were seeking. When our errand was explained, he seemed reluctant to go with me, but, after questioning me a while, consented, apologizing for his reluctance by saying that negroes had to be mighty careful in these times, and not trust every one. They were liable to be shot if seen out after nine o'clock, and, if caught befriending a Yankee, would surely be put to death.

The man was going to the house from which we had just come, but turned back with me. I bade my old guide good-by, and set out with my new one, going through forests and swamps by what seemed impenetrable paths, and coming at length to a clearing, in the centre of which stood a double cabin. It was the house of my companion. We entered it; and the guide urged another man who was there to accompany us. He was loath to doing so at first, but finally consented. We went on about two miles into a swamp, the new-comer hanging back all the way; and then, in a faint tone of voice, he said he did not want to go any farther. His cowardice infected the other, who also backed out, and turned to go backward.

Finding they would absolutely not go another step, I got from them the best directions I could, and started on alone. The night was so very dark, that the negroes had kept in the path with great difficulty, and only by groping with their sticks for the somewhat hardened ground of the pathway : so I thought my chance of losing myself decidedly favorable, and went on, feeling rather blue. They said that in a clearing close ahead was a cabin, where a free man named Henry lived, who, they thought, would guide me the rest of my journey. I could not feel angry with them for thus deserting me ; for the tramp was a dangerous one, and death was literally behind almost every bush. I thanked them heartily for what they had done, and we parted ; they cautioning me not to tell the man Henry that they had guided me ; for in these times it was best not to trust anybody, unless absolutely necessary.

Managing to keep in the path by using the negroes' method, I soon came to the clearing, and as I stood by the fence, narrowly inspecting the cabin, heard something scamper off among the corn, and a dog spring up, and go barking after it. It startled me at first ; but I concluded it had nothing to do with me, and soon all became quiet again. I could see gleams of light through the logs of the cabin, and

sparks coming out into the darkness as if from a chimney ; and, making my way very quietly around the building, I knocked at the door.

A dog barked ; and presently the door opened, and I was admitted. The man was a large mulatto, with a great shock of black hair, a very pretty mulatto wife, and several handsome children. He at first was very reserved and reticent ; and indeed continued so, in a degree, during the whole of our interview. I tried to re-assure him ; but he seemed to have marked out a line of conduct from which he would not be swerved. By asking a great many questions, I elicited from him the following information : That our pickets had been staying about two miles away, at a place called “ Old Shop Church,” but were then, he had been told by a Rebel, posted on another road still farther away. He did not know where the Rebels were ; they might be here, or might be there ; and there was no telling exactly where to find them, although at night they generally kept back towards the Jerusalem Road. He declined to pilot me to our pickets, but, after a time, gave me as full directions as he could.

He asked who showed me the way to his cabin, and, when I declined to tell, said he thought it was a free man who lived a piece back in a double cabin. I did not tell him

how truly he had conjectured, but let him have the benefit of the doubt.

As the night was very dark, I required the most minute directions, and, borrowing a pencil from the man, made a plan of every fence on my route, and every turning of the path I was to follow. I studied his directions until I was sure I should not mistake my way, and then remarked to my host that I would sit by his fire a while. He said I could if I pleased, but I must run my own risk. I sat a moment or two thinking the matter over, and then told the man I would start. He appeared relieved, and pointed out the way from his door. He was still reserved and reticent; and, being fearful he might betray me, I hastened on as fast as I could in the thick darkness.

I took careful note of the landmarks he had pointed out, and at length came to an old house partly in ruins, of which he had spoken. This convinced me I was right so far; and, feeling very tired, I went into the building, and lay down a while in a corner under some stairs. Resting somewhat, I set out again, and got lost in spite of myself. Coming soon upon some deserted buildings, I carefully reconnoitred them, and, entering one, waited until morning, when I might start anew in the right direction.

The night was so cloudy, I could see nothing to indicate the points of the compass ; but, when the first touch of red in the morning sky told me where the sun was rising, I set out, and, proceeding as rapidly as possible in a north-east direction, presently came upon a deserted cavalry camp. This the mulatto man had told me of ; and I felt assured I had not gone far out of the way. Scraps of blue clothing were scattered about, which looked like old friends.

About sunrise I arrived at " Old Shop Church," called by our people Sycamore Church. I knew it must be the place, and approached it with great care, the negro having said there might be scouts of either party in its vicinity ; but, crawling on my hands and knees through weeds and fences, I found it deserted. Its pews were scattered about in the adjoining grove, and the whole place showed evident signs of having recently been a camp. The road to which our troops had withdrawn was to the north-east of the church : so I started across the country in that direction, using every precaution to keep out of sight, and came at last upon the right road, and soon afterwards upon a queer fence built across it to stop a charge of cavalry.

I looked every moment for our pickets, but kept on mile after mile without finding any, and after a time passed a house

which answered the description of the one where the negro said the pickets were stationed ; but no pickets were there. However, a broad new trail of horses' hoofs, the hoofs turning from the enemy, led from the building. I did not know what to make of it. The trail was a deep one, and evidently made by a large body of cavalry. It was quite fresh ; and I went rapidly forward, thinking it probable the Rebel scouts had not yet come over from the Jerusalem Road. I passed a number of deserted camps, most of them rather old, and, about nine o'clock, heard very heavy firing in the direction of Petersburg. Having been at Petersburg, I knew that firing did not always indicate a battle ; but this sounded near and far, and fluctuated in a way that convinced me a fierce battle was raging. The cannonading was at times absolutely deafening.

Swinging along at a smart pace, I soon came in sight of a house some distance from the road, with trees in front, and a high broad fence all around it. I could not avoid it without a long detour, and hoped to get by unseen, as the building was surrounded by trees, and some distance back from the road. Besides, the road was dug or worn down fully two feet below the surface, with a Virginia fence on either side. I had drawn quite near the house, when suddenly I saw

seated near the garden fence two Rebel soldiers. I could not go back without running great risk of being seen, nor out of the road without certainly attracting their attention : so I went upon my hands and knees, and crawled by. Luckily they did not discover me ; perhaps because my clothing was of the color of the ground, and I partially screened by the fence. I had to travel in this manner for some distance, but at last came to a piece of swampy wood on the right, and entered it without being seen.

Following the broad trail of the horses' hoofs, I hurried forward, the heavy firing still going on, sometimes almost dying away, and again crashing out with redoubled vigor. I came at length to a railroad which I thought probably led to Suffolk or Norfolk. I was very anxious to find some negro of whom to learn my whereabouts, and, seeing a house a short distance down the road, went near, and looked about it a bit. It was on a cart-road some ways back from the railroad, and two or three barn-like buildings were in its vicinity : so I could approach quite near to it without being seen. In a shed near by, I found several scraps of papers ; one of them ordering Major——, commanding outpost pickets, to draw in his force, and report to his brigade commander. The paper was dated the day before.

Approaching the house, I saw a little negro girl drawing water at a well, and, seeing no signs of any one else, beckoned to her to come to me. Instead of coming, she ran into the house ; and I was debating whether to run or not, when a fat white woman came to the door. Advancing to the house, I spoke to her in the Southern style, saying I was escaping from the Yanks, and wanted to know where their pickets were, so as to avoid them. She seemed delighted to hear I had got away from the Yankees, and told me to go right down the Norfolk Railroad, and I could get safely away. I thanked her warmly, but said I should like to know just where the Yankee pickets were, as it would be useful information to carry with me. She replied that she wished she knew ; but she didn't. All she could say was, that "yesterday they were all about, and to day they were all gone ;" and she added, "Thar's a right smart chance of slippin' now," — which in English means that a great many persons are now escaping.

I chatted with the woman for a while longer. She said there were no men about of any kind ; that the Rebels never scouted up so far ; that the Yanks had been there all along ; and the Rebels would not be likely to come, now that the Yanks were gone. The old woman's generosity did not

keep pace with her Southern patriotism. I could not get even a drink of milk from her; and, just as I was going away, I let fall something which made her suspect that all was not right. She grew very thoughtful, and looked a little frightened; but I did not tell her the truth, — she was forlorn enough already. I bade her good-by at last; and she stood in the doorway looking after me, while I kept straight on by the road, which, she said, led to City Point.

As I was going through a swampy place, a couple of splendid wild turkeys flew up a little ahead of me, so near that I could easily have shot one of them if I had had a gun. They were the finest I ever saw; and, as they flew up over the trees, the sun struck brilliant flashes of green from their bright plumage. Soon after, I came upon an extensive camp, which had been deserted but a few hours. There were light fortifications, felled trees, and abatis planked in the roads; and just beyond this was a large clearing of about a mile long, with three or four plantations scattered through it.

I reconnoitred the nearest house very carefully. A gang of negroes were at work near it, and I watched them some time; but a white boy was with them, and I could get no chance to show myself to the negroes without being seen by the boy. They were going back and forth, gathering corn;

and, as they went down the road, I sprang across it, and, concealing myself behind a log near the fence, tried to make them see me; but they looked away, while the boy's eyes roved all about the premises. I could get no chance to speak to them, and soon they stopped work and went away.

Then I crawled along under the fence, near the large gate, and soon saw a little white boy coming down the drive-way. I sat down behind the gate, and, when he came out, used all my art to win his confidence, and draw him into conversation. I succeeded; and he sat on my knee, and talked, while I asked his name and age with as much apparent interest as if I had been the census-taker. He could not speak plainly; but I gathered from what he could say that a sick soldier was in the house, and that he wore blue clothes. The little fellow didn't seem to have any hatred of Yankees, and I thought it likely the family was of Union sentiments.

The boy who had been working with the hands then came along, two negroes with him. I waited for them; and they were surprised to see the little boy making friends with a stranger. After a few careful questions, I found my surmise was correct. The boy's father was a soldier in our army. The soldier in the house was a United-States safeguard, to protect his property from stragglers. He was very

sick, — so sick as to be delirious. I knew he was in good hands, and, sending my regards to madam, started for the next house, where they told me was another safeguard. My heart beat high at the prospect of so soon seeing a Union soldier and the good old blue.

As I approached the house, all the people ran out, and among them appeared the dark-blue uniform of a United-States soldier. I walked up to the gate with a springing step and a glad face, which the soldier seemed to understand, for he shook my hands heartily. I told him who I was, and how glad I was to see one like him once more ; and then his stolid German face lighted up, and he gave me another hearty shake of the hand. In the course of our conversation, he said that a big battle was being fought below Petersburg, beyond the Weldon Railroad ; and, as things had changed since yesterday, he did not know where our pickets were. He cautioned me to look out for deserters from our army : they were mean, despicable fellows, and might trouble me.

As I was still not entirely sure of reaching our pickets, I left my name and address with the German ; and he promised to write to my friends that I had come thus far, and was well. I bade him good-by, and, after various trivial inci-

dents, arrived at what had been Prince George Court House. It was only a mass of ruins, encircled with a large, deserted earthwork. Several roads branched from it; and, taking the one in a north-east direction, I hurried forward. The road had been recently marched over, as the many foot-tracks, and the books and papers thrown away on a march, testified. I picked up some of the books; but they were of the yellow-covered order, and not worth carrying. At length I came to an immense clearing, with a road leading through it. I knew this was quite near to City Point; for I heard the whistle of engines, and knew the sound must come from the City-Point and Petersburg Railroad. Soon I saw a wagon with one or two women in it, and a mounted guard riding alongside. They were crossing the road I was on; and I hurried forward, and shouted to the soldier, asking him if that was the road to City Point. He nodded, and pointed in the direction I was going.

About two miles farther on, I came upon a number of deserted camps and buildings. A plantation was ahead, evidently occupied. The house was a long, red one, surrounded with negro cabins; and, as I approached near, I saw something like horses' tails switching about in a little grove beyond it. A gentle rise of ground was between me and the

house ; and, if I went over it, I should be seen. I did not relish being shot by a nervous hundred-days' man, and determined to come upon them in such a way as would avoid a challenge.

Turning off to the left among the negro cabins, I asked a negro where our pickets were. He looked astonished, and said, "Why, right down dar," pointing to the grove of trees. Then I went boldly to the house, and asked a woman if she could not give me a lunch. I wanted to enjoy my pleasurable feelings as long as possible, and no doubt acted very much as a cat acts when playing with a mouse. She told me to go round to the front porch (the side where the soldiers were), and she would give me something. I went round, and sat down in the porch.

Four United-States soldiers were at the front gate, not ten rods from me ; and they stared at me, but made no motion to come towards me. I waved my cap to them ; but they only stared the harder. A little girl then brought me a plate of pork and corn-bread, and I tried to eat ; but my appetite was gone. Stuffing the food into my pocket, I handed back the plate with my thanks, and started down towards the pickets. They looked queerly at me, and, when I told them who I was, were all mouths and eyes.

One of them drew his sabre, and said he would accompany me to the guard-quarters. We went into the grove, and there about fifty men crowded around to learn who and what I was. They were very jubilant when I told them ; and one of them shouted out that he, too, was from Massachusetts, as if he was proud of it.

They furnished me a horse ; and, escorted by a major and a corporal, I soon rode into headquarters at City Point. Several amusing incidents occurred on the way ; but I have not space to relate them. The corporal was several times cautioned to “look out for me ;” and we laughed, but did not stop to enlighten every one.

I was taken to General Benham’s headquarters, and soon convinced him that I was all right. The general greeted me very cordially, and immediately installed me as his guest. I had a good dinner, and was introduced to the general’s staff. One of them—Captain Channing Clapp, of Boston—took particular charge of me ; giving me his bed in spite of me, and sleeping on the floor. He also gave me his room while I took a bath and changed my clothing, — he furnishing a new shirt and stockings, and a vest, blouse, and paper-collar. This latter, however, I soon grew tired of, and slyly took off.

I tried to rest a little, and laid down for an hour, but could not sleep, — I was so filled with thoughts of home. I supped with General Benham, who, I found, knew some Dorchester people, and understood very well where I lived. In the evening, I went with Captain Clapp to General Patrick's quarters, and he asked me a great many questions relative to the Rebels. At last I went to bed, but did not get to sleep until after midnight, there being such a terrible thunder of cannon. The officers said it was one of the heaviest cannonadings they had heard. The sound at times was truly grand, ringing up and down the line all the way from the Appomattox to the Weldon Railroad.

Our officers were afraid the Rebels were trying to pierce our lines, and, for a time, felt some concern, as the works were thinly manned; Grant having taken away all the spare men. They said, that, so long as the cannonading was kept up, we might know all was right; and, after the firing had gone on some time, they concluded it was all right sure; for the lines would have been broken before, if they could have been broken at all.

The next morning, General Grant sent his adjutant to tell me he desired to see me. Captain Clapp and I had drawn up a request for a furlough, which had been signed by Gen-

erals Benham and Patrick ; and, taking this with us, we went over to see the general. He was not at his quarters just then ; and, his adjutant-general approving the furlough, I went over to the provost-marshal's to get it stamped for Washington, while Captain Clapp went for my clothes, so I should not lose the boat, which went to Washington at half-past ten, A.M.

When I went back to the general's, my things were there, and I was all ready to start as soon as I had seen him. A French general and his aide were in waiting ; and I was introduced to them by Colonel Hopkins, the adjutant-general. They acted as if they thought I was General Grant himself ; bowing and scraping, and pulling off their hats to me in a grand fashion. They were covered with gold lace ; and the general had half a dozen different orders pinned to his breast, and probably was a person of some consequence. They had been announced to the general, and now went down to see him.

I was introduced to General Thomas and others while waiting for their return. I told Colonel Hopkins I did not believe the general would want to see me now that he had such distinguished company. The colonel laughed, and said the general would get rid of the Frenchman very quickly.

They soon after left, and I was introduced to the general. He raised his hat and shook hands with me, saying he was glad I had been so fortunate as to get away from the Rebels. We then conversed about the Rebels, I telling him all I knew about them.

I talked with him about half an hour. He said the cannonading of the night before was occasioned by an attack of our men on a Rebel fort, which they took, capturing a colonel, major, captain, and about seventy-five men, and then returning to our lines. The Rebels were afraid of another attack; and, as the night was very dark, the only way they could prevent it was to keep firing, whether there was any thing to fire at or not. Our artillery answered them; and, altogether, a great deal of powder was burned, without many being hurt on either side.

When I had told the general all I could think of, I said so; and again congratulating me, and wishing me a pleasant time at home, he bade me good-by, shaking my hand cordially, and saying the boat was waiting. I ran down to the landing, and went aboard.

Soon after, the boat started; and, in course of conversation with an officer, he said General Grant had sent down an orderly to keep the boat waiting, and that we had not started

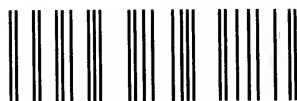
on time. I did not say any thing, but thought it possible the general had detained the boat for me. If he did so, it was a thoughtful act, as, if it had gone without me, I should have been compelled to wait there another day. Captain Clapp, just before I took leave of him, loaned me twenty-five dollars ; and I arrived at Washington with no trouble.

Many of the passengers were very kind ; one gentleman pressing me to go home with him, and saying he would furnish me with as much money as I wished. I would not take any ; but he insisted on paying for my meals on the boat. I thought, when I first arrived at Washington, I would go to the headquarters of transportation, and get a free passage home ; but I found it would take some time, and, being very impatient to get home, bought my ticket, and, after sending home a telegram to my folks, took my seat in the cars for New York. As I passed through the gate to go to the cars, an officer asked me for my pass, and, when he had read it, smiled slyly, and asked if I was in the secret service. He looked puzzled ; but I could not chat with every one ; and, if he has not forgotten me, he is probably puzzled still. My queer appearance attracted attention ; and a good many people introduced themselves to me, and made my trip to New York quite pleasant.

I arrived at Boston before sunrise in the morning. No cars were going to my home for over an hour : so I set out on foot. I stepped into a neighbor's yard, and he went to tell my folks I was coming. I knew my mother was weak and nervous, and did not wish to shock her by any great surprise. I went home in a few minutes ; and the folks were very glad to see me, judging from their actions. I was just as glad to see them, and we were a happy set.

THE END.

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